



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

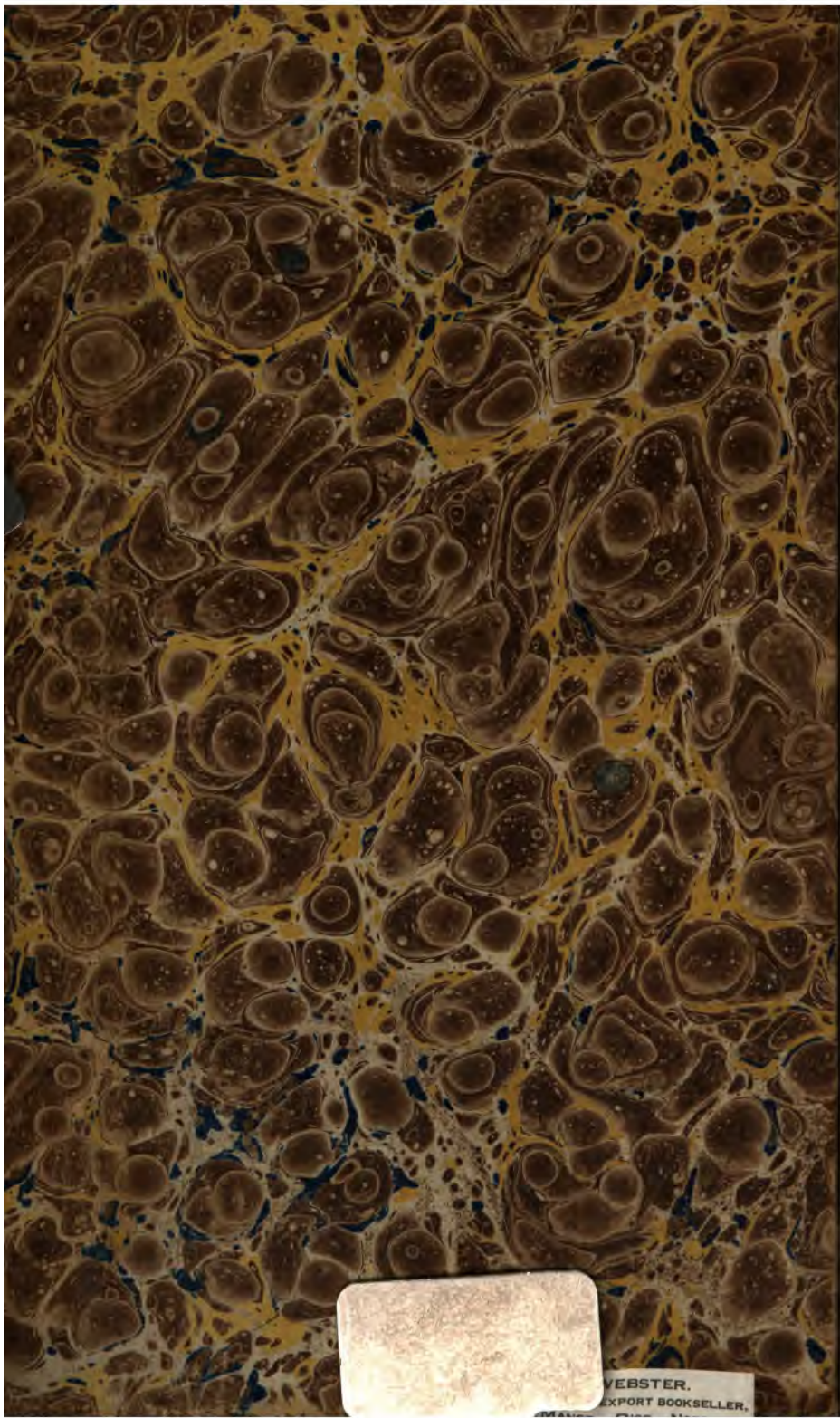
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



WEBSTER,
EXPORT BOOKSELLER,
MAINE



Bot from T. D. Webster

17/6

Georges.
1850.

256 ~. 17081

JACK BRAG.

BY THEODORE HOOK,

AUTHOR OF

"SAYINGS AND DOINGS,"—"GILBERT GURNEY," ETC.



PARIS:

PUBLISHED BY A. AND W. GALIGNANI AND C^o.
No. 18, RUE VIVIENNE.

—
1837.



JACK BRAG.

CHAPTER I.

"My dear Johnny," said the respectable widow Brag to her son, "what is the good of your going on in this way? Here, instead of minding the business, you are day after day galloping and gallivanting, steeple-chasing, fox-hunting, lord-hunting, a wasting your time and your substance, the shop going to old Nick, and you getting dipped instead of your candles."

"Mother," said Jack, "don't talk so foolishly! You are of the old school,—excellent in your way, but a long way behindhand: the business is safe enough. You cannot suppose, with the education I have had, I can meddle with moulds, or look after sixes, tens, fours to the pound, or farthing rushlights;—no, thanks to my enlightenment, I flatter myself I soar a little higher than that."

"No nonsense, Johnny!" said Mrs. Brag. "All you have now, and all you have spent since your poor father's death, was gained by your father's enlightenment of his customers: and how do you suppose I can carry on the trade if you will not now and then attend to it?"

"Take my advice, my dear mother," said Jack, "and marry. I'm old enough now not to care a fig for a father-in-law;—marriage is the plan, as I say to my friend Lord Tom—straight up, right down, and no mistake. Get a sensible, stir-about husband, who does not mind grubbing, and hasn't a nose——"

"Hasn't a nose?" interrupted Mrs. Brag.

"I don't mean literally," said Jack, "but sportingly;—does not mind the particular scent of tallow—you understand. Let him into the tricks of the trade: you will still be queen-bee of the hive,—make *him* look after the drones while you watch the wax."

"And while you, Johnny, lap up the honey," said the queen-bee.

"Do what you like," said her son, "only marry—'marry come up,' as somebody says in a play."

"But, John," said Mrs. Brag, "I have no desire to change my condition."

"Nor I that you should," said Jack; "but I wish you would change your name. As long as 'Brag, wax and tallow-chandler,' sticks up on the front of the house, with three dozen and four dangling dips swinging along the shop-front, like so many malefactors expiating their crimes, I live in a perpetual fever lest my numerous friends should inquire whether I am one of the firm or the family."

"Johnny," said Mrs. Brag, "you are a silly fellow. What is there to be ashamed of in honest industry? If all the fine folks whom you go a-hunting with, and all the rest of it, like you, and are really glad to see you, it is for yourself alone: and if they, who must know by your name and nature that you can never be one of themselves, care a button for you, your trade, so as you do not carry it about with you, will do you no harm. What difference is it to them how you get your thorough-bred horses, your smart scarlet coat, neat tops, and white cords, so as you have them?—they won't give you any new ones when they are gone."

"It is all very well talking," said Johnny, "but I never should show my face amongst them if I once thought they guessed at my real trade. I live in a regular worry as it is. If ever a fellow asks me if I was at Melton last year, that moment I think of the shop—'pretty mould of a horse' tingles in my ears—'sweet dip of the country' sets me doubting; and, only last week, a proposal to go 'cross country and meet Lord Hurricane's harriers at Hampton Wick nearly extinguished me."

"And what now, Johnny," said Mrs. Brag, "do you think these lords take you for, if not for a tallow-chandler?"

"An independent gentleman," said Jack.

"That is to say," replied his mother, "a gentleman who has nothing to depend upon."

"They look upon me as an agreeable rattle," said John.

"One that has often been in the watchman's hands too," said the old lady.

"I talk big and ride small," said Jack, "I am always up with the hounds—never flinch at anything,—am the pride of the field wherever I go,—and in steeple-chases of infinite value."

"And very little weight, my dear Johnny," interrupted his mother.

"One of my dearest friends," continued Brag, "Lord Tom Towzle, a deuce of a fellow amongst the females, is going to put me up as a candidate at the Travellers."

"What, riders for respectable houses?" said Mrs. Brag: "and a very proper club too."

"Respectable houses!" said Jack. "Poh! not a bit of it! What! bagmen in buggies with boxes of buttons in the boots? No, no! the Travellers—*par excellence*."

"Par what?" said Mrs. Brag. "What, d'ye mean the fine Club-

house in Pall Mall which you showed me the outside of, last King's birth-night?"

"The same," said Brag. "Now, if I had stuck to the naked, as, Lord Tom says—told the plain unvarnished—I never could have qualified. Lord Tom asked me if I should like to belong to the Travellers;—in course I said yes—straight up, right down, and no mistake. Well, then he asks me if I could qualify;—so not quite understanding him, he says, 'Have you ever been in Greece?'—'Yes,' said I:—I *might* have added 'up to the elbows often;' didn't though. Had him dead. Down he whips my name, and calls in Sir Somebody Something out of the street to second me."

"If you should get in there Johnny," said Mrs. Brag, "do get 'em to give up gas and take to oil on illumination nights. But what I think is, somebody is sure to find you out, Johnny."

"Time enough," said Jack. "I'm going it now smooth and soft across the country, increasing my acquaintance; falling into the society of elegant females—women of fashion, with beautiful faces and liberal hearts;—introduced to three last week—proud as peacocks to everybody else, delighted with *me*;—met them at Ascot—cold collation in the carriage—champaign iced from London;—got on capital—never was so happy in my life—hottest weather I ever felt; spirits mounted—I was the delight of the party—told them half a dozen stories of myself, and made them laugh like cockatoos, but I was bundled all of a heap by the Marquis of Middlesdale, who had been at luncheon with the King, who, in passing the barouche, gave me a smack on the back you might have heard to Egham, and cried out, 'Jack, this is a melting day, is n't it?'"

"He meant it, Johnny, depend upon it," said Mrs. Brag.

"I've no doubt he did," said Brag, "for it was as hot as ever I felt it——"

"— In the back shop," interrupted his mother. "But pray, Johnny, where do these people think you live?"

"At a great house in Grosvenor-street," said Jack, "next door to What-d'ye-call-'em's Hotel: my name is on the door, and my address on my card."

"But you don't live there," said Mrs. Brag. "Not I," replied the son: "I only rent the door."

"How d'ye mean?" said his mother.

"Why, I went to the man," said Brag, "who keeps the house. 'Now, sir,' said I, 'I want to rent four square inches of your panels. He was puzzled for the moment; but I was down upon him in no time, and no mistake.—Out I pulls from my pocket a brass plate of those precise dimensions, whereon is engraven 'Mr. Brag.'—'What will you take per annum,' said I, 'to let this be screwed on to your door, and let your servant take in my cards and letters?' Startled him a little at first: however, he entered himself for the

plate, acceded to my proposition,—and so for the trifling consideration of four guineas per annum, and a tip to the slavey, I get the credit of five windows in front, three stories high, in one of the best streets in London.”

“But do none of your friends ever expect to be let in?” said Mrs. Brag.

“Yes,” said Brag, “for a good thing now and then,—and so they are, pretty often. Long head, mother—have it here”—tapping his forehead with his fore-finger—“look simple with my fresh colour and curly hair, but as deep as Garrick—cannot write your X’s, Z’s with me,—else, in course, they might expect admission. ‘Not at home,’ is always the answer. ‘Out of town?’ is the next question;—‘Yes,’ is the next answer.—‘Where?’ comes next.—‘Down at his little place in Surrey.’ That finishes it. They lodge pasteboard and away they go.”

“Little place in Surrey!” said Mrs. Brag;—“why, what d’ye mean?—have you a country-house too?”

“Country-house! said Brag, “Lord bless your dear heart, not I! Nothing but my old lodging, on the second floor, No. 37, at the carpenter’s, corner of Caterpillar-row, Kennington.”

“And *that* you call your little place in Surrey, do you?” said Mrs. Brag.

“Yes, mother, and no fib neither,” said Brag. “It is almost the littlest place I ever saw in my life; and as for Caterpillar-row, if it isn’t in Surrey I know nothing of going ‘cross a country.”

“Ah, Johnny, Johnny,” said his respected parent with a mingled look of sorrow and admiration, “you never will mend till it is too late!”

“Mother,” said Jack, “now you say that I think I shall be too late for Lord Tom Towzle. We are going off for Wigglesford to mark out a line. All ready for a run: we have got no mercy in us,—none of your bowling-green, daisy-cutting work for us—no, we’ll try to pick out rasping fences, bottomless brooks, and ditches as wide as rivers;—a steeple-chase without killing a horse or two, cracking a collar-bone, slipping a shoulder, or pitching an out-and-outer on the top of his conk, is no fun in the world.”

“Ah! well, well,” said Mrs. Brag, “I wish you would give a little time to the books and the business: some day you’ll repent this.”

“Not I, mother,” said Jack; “I can pull up any day and marry. I never yet saw the woman I could not win—they are all ready to eat me up: in course, as the book says, I am the more wary—hang back a bit. Don’t you see, as I get on in the world, I get up; and if I can marry a Lady Sally or a Lady Susan—eh! won’t that be nice!—specially if there happens to be an odd thirty or forty thousand pounds tacked to the title.”

"Don't flatter yourself Johnny," replied Mrs. Brag, shaking her head: "*that* scheme will never answer."

"You'll see," said Jack;—"I say nothing, but you'll see. If I were to sit down and write an account of my adventures with the females, I should be run after like a sight. The females of fashion that I meet at the races call me 'dear Johnny' as it is."

"I wonder you are not afraid of seeing the ghost of your poor father," said the widow.

"What! the Governor?" cried Jack; "never mind ghosts nor Governors, here is my Leporello. So I'm off. Good-b' ye, dear mother!—you'll see me soon again,—I shall be back by Saturday, and so keep snug Sunday."

"Where? at your town-house in Grosvenor-street," said the old lady, "or your little place in Surrey?"

"Neither, I take it," said Jack, looking as wise as a very foolish person could. "I devote Sunday afternoon to a very select society—eh!—females of fashion, delightful creatures, and all that. So, adieu!"

Kissing the matron's cheek, away went our hero in order to revel in all the luxuries of sport, and in the society which, he admitted, kept him in a fever while he was in it: not that the true circle of his aristocratic acquaintance was particularly large, however much he nominally increased it by dubbing every man his friend with whom he had happened to hunt in the same field or dine in a public company of three hundred and fifty; and every well-dressed woman a lady of fashion whom he happened to see with the tigers in whose set he mingled.

Mrs. Brag, who felt extremely anxious about her son and herself, saw that the business was rapidly "burning down." The introduction of oil had superseded wax; and since that, the adoption of gas had superseded oil. No efforts were made to improve the concern, and all she heard, was of considerable drafts from the account at the banker's and very small payments into it; and Mrs. Brag, a comely, hearty-looking body of her time of life, began to ponder the words which her dutiful son had with little apparent earnestness let drop, as to changing her condition, with a view to increase the reputation of the house and extend its sphere of action, while the name, at sight of which her son trembled, might be withdrawn. She did not clearly see her way in this proceeding: nor had she either fixed her affections upon any particular object, nor was she conscious that she had attracted the regards of any suitable partner. However, the notion was entertained—the idea had been started; and how the exemplary matron set her means to work, in order to effect the grand object, we may, if we live long enough, yet discover.

The reader perhaps, in the few pages which he has yet either

been doomed to, or condescended to read, has already discovered what sort of man Mr. John Brag is, or was. It seemed best to give a short domestic scene in the candle-manufactory by way of prelude to the genteel comedy in which the gay deceiver is destined to perform; and it will be only necessary to keep in mind the sage yet ineffective lesson of the dear old body to whom her affectionate son recommended matrimony, in order duly to appreciate the performance of her "pretty boy," who, spite of his colour and his curls, was verging upon what may be called the "shady side" of thirty.

Old Mrs. Brag had, as Miss Scropps, married at seventeen; and although, as far as my own experience goes, I admit I never saw such a thing, she was said to be a lady of nearly fifty-five years of age, somewhere about the period at which this glimpse at the history of her yet unrecorded family begins.

It may be supposed that I should apologise for bringing the eyes, or perhaps the noses, of my readers in contact with all the arcana of Mr. John's shop; but I have a reason for doing so. I propose not merely to show by illustration how very ridiculous a pretender must always be, but to exhibit a striking instance of the retributive justice which seems somehow to keep the world in an equipoise, by exhibiting the wonderful utility of which the meanest and stupidest animal extant may prove; as *vide* (to quote the words of James the First, about Dæmonology) the fable of the Lion, the Mouse, and the Meshes.

Soar we then for a moment from the gloom of the tallow-chandler to a more charming region, and to people of a different mould, —and yet who, as the reader will see, may in the course of events become connected, and intimately too, with our sprightly gentleman in the scarlet-jacket and white cords. Let us, therefore, betake ourselves to the *boudoir* of one of the most charming young widows in England, where she is sitting *tête-à-tête* with her unmarried sister, talking over two absent gentlemen, whose tempers and dispositions are the immediate subject of their conversation.

Mrs. Dallington, the elder of the two ladies so engaged, had been married at nineteen; merely to oblige her father, (who died six months afterwards,) to a gentleman of the name which she still bore; who, to all the other merits which distinguished his character, emulated in a high degree the fox-hunting propensities of the tallow-man in the white cords of whom we have just spoken. He was, however, rich, and a gentleman, and had a right to make as great a fool of himself as he pleased, —and so he did: and the foolery began in his leaving a beautiful wife, with a pair of eyes as black as sloes and as bright as diamonds, alone and moping, while he was amusing himself by following his dogs, which dogs were

following something certainly not sweeter than themselves across the country.

Mr. Dallington, who rode about nine stone four, one fine morning, when the scent lay "uncommon strong," the dogs in full cry, the field in a state of the highest excitement, the fox going away right on-end across a heavy country, which would probably break the hearts of some of the horses and the necks of some of the riders, met with a slight accident, which in fox-hunting goes for very little, but which in its proverbial or rather convivial parallel, matrimony, goes for something more. In switching a rasper, the exemplary and high-spirited gentleman missed his tip and pitched right upon his head in the middle of a ditch, where he remained exactly long enough to make the lovely wife he had left at home a very delightful widow.

Dallington, or at least what had been Dallington in the early part of the day, was put upon a hurdle and taken to a farmhouse; whence the melancholy intelligence was conveyed to his lady, who, with all the respect she felt for her late father's judgment in selecting him for her partner for life, considered the event which had just taken place as philosophically as any woman of strong feelings and a tender disposition might be supposed to endure any sudden shock which results from the death of a fellow-creature.

True, most true it is, she never had felt that sort of love for the husband forced upon her, as a "fine match," which a woman ought to feel for the being who is destined (if he be fortunate enough) to share her hopes, her wishes, and her happiness. Mrs. Dallington was a creature all intellect, all vivacity, all fire; full of arch playfulness and gaiety of heart, and as completely the reverse of her quiet, timid, and sensitive sister, as light of darkness, fire of water, or any other two unmeetable opposites.

There are many adages connected with love and matrimony which it must be admitted are, however forcible in themselves, extremely contradictory of each other. But, in the course of considerable experience in such matters, I am apt to imagine that the real truth is—supposing always exceptions to general rules—that women are most apt to prefer men the least like themselves; and men, *vice versa*. It is the pride of a little man to have a large wife; it is the taste of a tall man to possess a short one: a fair woman admires a dark Lothario; while a bright-eyed brunette delights in blazing away upon a fair Romeo. A learned man eschews a blue partner; he relaxes into ease in the company of his ordinarily-educated better-half, and reposes from his graver studies in the agreeable common places of an intelligent but not abstruse associate; while the learned lady prefers the plodding spouse, and never desires that he should meddle with her arts and sciences, but merely wishes

him to exert his energies in the comfortable arrangement of their establishment, and the acquirement of the supplies necessary to set off her own attractions in their most alluring form before the visitors whom she chooses to invite.

The assimilation of tempers and dispositions by which happiness grows between married couples is, in fact, a habit most amiable and advantageous : the handwritings of men and their wives become like each other in the course of time. But whether the love of contraries in the abstract, be or be not so general as some observers would have it to be, certain it is that in the particular individual case before us it did exist.

Sir Charles Lydiard had been, just about the period at which the reader is introduced to him, some two years paying his addresses to the vivacious widow Dallington. He was a man of high principle, rigid honour, polished manners, and most amiable disposition ; but he was cold, reserved, and even suspicious of the object of his affections. His suspicions, or perhaps they might be more justly called doubts, arose not from the slightest want of confidence in the candour or sincerity of the lady, but in a want of confidence in himself. He might fairly have said to his heroine with Steele's hero :—

————— “Of you I am not jealous,—
'Tis my own indelert that gives me fears :
And tenderness forms dangers were they're not.
I doubt and envy all things that approach thee.”

There he was, the constant, faithful lover, never away from the house, sitting and sighing “like furnace,” listening to the gaities of Mrs. Dallington's conversation, a very spectre of despair, not ill described by the English Aristophanes in the person of one Harry Hectic, with a bunch of jonquils in his button-hole, looking dead and dressed, like the waxwork in Westminster Abbey. There was no animating him, no rousing him into a proposal ; his attachment had become habitual, and day after day the affair went on without “progressing,” as the Americans have it, one inch. And yet the widow was devoted to Sir Charles. It must be admitted that she every morning expected *the* question ; but every evening that expectation was blighted, and the worthy baronet returned from his placid state of negative happiness to his solitary home, to lie awake for hours balancing the chances of matrimony, and endeavouring to make up his mind to the deciding inquiry which, if the real truth were told, he lingeringly delayed, apprehensive that it might meet with a negative certain not only to kill the hopes which sometimes outweighed his doubts, but to put an end to his acquaintance with the charming widow altogether.

While Sir Charles Lydiard remained thus drooping in the bright sunshine of Mrs. Dallington's eyes, her timid sister Blanche was un-

dergoing a siege of a very different nature. Far from contenting himself, to use a military phrase, with sitting down before the place, and establishing a corps of observation merely to watch the enemy, Frank Rushton, who was more madly in love than ever dandy had been found to be for many years, had for the last three months,—the whole period, in fact, of his acquaintance with her,—been assiduously and incessantly carrying on an attack upon the heart of his adorable Dulcinea; and, as it appeared, with as little chance of making an impression as her sister had of exciting Sir Charles to an offer. In fact, the four players at this love-game were equally divided into the fiery and frosty; but, which in the sequel made all the sport, as Mr. Brag would have called it, the partners were so curiously matched, and the icicles and sunbeams so regularly and heraldically counter-changed, that the lovers and their mistressess were the exact opposites of each other. It was extremely amusing to hear the discussions in which Sir Charles and his friend Rushton were in the habit of indulging.

"My dear Frank," said Sir Charles, "your affection for Blanche is madness,—the way in which you go on, sets me in a fever: and as for the poor young creature herself, she is absolutely harassed out of her wits."

"So *you* think, Sir Charles," replied Frank; "but it strikes *me* that her sister would not be less pleased with your society if you were to follow my example. Why there you sit moping and melancholy, as if you were on the edge of your own grave, instead of being on the verge of all earthly happiness: you look and languish, sigh and say nothing, and, like the Cardinal, 'die, and make no sign.'"

"It may be so," said the baronet,—"I suppose it is so; but I cannot,—struggle as I may with my feelings,—I cannot overcome the doubts which seem to me to cloud the prospect of the felicity of which you talk so easily."

"Doubts! my dear friend," said Rushton; "what doubts can you have? Your doubts are, in fact, jealousies,—and how needless! Mrs. Dallington has been a wife,—and never was a more exemplary wife in the world."

"Her trial was short," said Sir Charles; "nor should I call it a fair one,—her marriage was not one of love."

"Then so much the greater her credit for the conduct she observed," said Rushton.

"The struggle did not last long," replied Sir Charles: "her husband was killed within eight months of their marriage."

"She bore her loss like a Christian," said Rushton.

"Yes," sighed the baronet; "it is wonderful to behold the pious resignation of ladies in her position."

"Well," said Rushton, "if your apprehensions overcome your

affection, and your doubts transcend your hopes, break off the acquaintance at once,—take your hat and go—”

“—And be neither missed nor inquired after, in all probability,” said Lydiard.

“There you wrong your fair friend,” said Rushton. “She values you, esteems you, and with a very little trouble on *your* part would love you. Your flame is so gentle, that it scarcely warms; and, like the fire in the grate there, if she did not occasionally stir it with good nature and kind looks, my belief is, it would go out entirely.”

“My dear Rushton,” said Sir Charles, “you entirely misunderstand my character, and the character of my affection for our charming friend: my doubts are the ‘fruits of love.’”

“A most disagreeable harvest, Lydiard,” replied Rushton.

“True,” said Sir Charles, “but I cannot conquer them. You blame my caution and coldness; but when I see you devoting yourself, hand over head, if I may so say, to the mild, quiet, timid, blushing creature, Blanche, I cannot, since I had the honour of introducing you to the family, but feel anxious on your account. I don’t believe one word of all those professions of meekness, and mildness, and modesty of which that young lady is so profusely liberal. I have seen her exchange looks with her sister,—while you, blinded by your passion, have seen nothing—which convince me that you would do well to scrutinise and consider before you plunge into the stormy ocean of matrimony.”

“Why,” said Rushton, “Blanche is something like Moore’s beautiful Nora Greena:

‘Few her looks, but every one
Like unexpected light surprises.’”

“Egad!” said Lydiard, “the light I saw was both surprising and unexpected. I have some little experience in family telegraphs, but the signal she threw out was one not altogether complimentary to *you*, for she seemed to me to be laughing at you.”

“Don’t be too sure of that, Charles,” said Rushton. “I too have seen those telegraphic symptoms; and my opinion is, that if *you* were to adopt *my* style of proceeding, you would find the widow much less attentive to her sister’s evolutions. But no;—you have fallen into a custom of going there day after day; you feel at your ease, you enjoy the society and conversation of a delightful person; and because you have nothing to excite you to action, so the affair goes on—not even a dash of jealousy to creat a fermentation in your cup of nectar.”

“There you mistake,” said Lydiard. “I—I—certainly never have touched upon the subject—never opened my lips to a human being about it; but I am not quite so sure that it is not jealousy which keeps me backward and depresses me.”

"Indeed!" said Rushton; "jealous! What of somebody who visits at the house?"

"Yes," said Sir Charles.

"Do you mean Sir Baggs Waddilove?" said Rushton.

"Psha—no."

"Perhaps that Colonel Scramshaw?"

"Not a bit of it."

"The Count?"

"What, Swagandstraddle!—No."

"Lord Tom Towzle?"

"You burn," said Sir Charles, "as the children say to the blinded one;—not of him, Frank—what think you of his friend."

"What, that horrid, vulgar dog, Brag," said Rushton, "his toady—his spaniel?"

"Upon my honour, yes," said Sir Charles.

"The deuce you are!" said Rushton; "that's very odd."

"It is," said Lydiard, "I confess I am almost ashamed of being ruffled by such a fellow; but, somehow, Mrs. Dallington seems so much at her ease with him, notwithstanding his vulgarity, his glaring ignorance, and his unbounded impertinence, that, upon my honour, I cannot help thinking—you know women are very odd creatures and I——"

"You surprise me, Lydiard," said Rushton, "but not disagreeably. I have thought,—only don't mention it—that Blanche has a sort of,—eh—you understand me—a partiality for him—I don't know how it is; she certainly looks at the monster, now and then."

"What," interrupted Lydiard, "some more of her few unexpected lights, eh?"

"I cannot understand it," said Rushton: "I suppose he entertains them with his absurdities, and his nonsense, and even his vanity, and his vulgarity. But I think we may both be pretty secure, that neither of such women as your widow and my Blanche could entertain a serious thought of a fellow of whom nobody knows anything except as Lord Tom Towzle's tiger, especially in a house into which Lord Tom himself finds it particularly difficult to get the *entrée*."

"No," said Lydiard, "one would not think there was much danger; and yet—yet you *will* allow it is very odd indeed that we should both have been struck with the same notion?"

"So it is," replied Rushton. "However, as far as I am concerned, I am determined to fathom the affair to the bottom. I love Blanche better than my life; but if I thought——"

"Stop, stop, Rushton," interrupted the worthy baronet. "What has gone with your stern reproof of my scepticism? Here are *you* who have been just rallying me upon my doubts with regard to the loveliest of her sex, now coming to fathom an affair to the bottom

which implicates in your mind the sincerity and single-heartedness of one of the purest, gentlest Nora Greenas that ever walked with her eyes cast down upon the earth."

"Hang the fellow!" said Rushton; "it is too ridiculous! Besides, he is not often there. Yet, never mind—he may do good: the smallest wheel in a great piece of machinery has its work to perform to keep all the rest going. This stupid animal may serve to equalize our passions, and make us see clearer; he will cool *me* and warm *you*, and who knows but it may turn out all for the best."

"Why," said Lydiard, "the fact is pretty clear:—As we have not, even in this age of liberality, arrived at so great a reform of the church as to establish the toleration of bigamy, he can marry but one of the ladies; and, as far as I am concerned, if my adorable widow has a taste which would lead her to admit the pretensions of that miserable little animal, I am quite sure it never could be diverted into a passion for me: and so, Mr. Rushton, if he conquer, he is perfectly welcome to the fruits of his triumph."

"Ah, that's it!" said Rushton: "there are prudence, philosophy, wisdom, and half a dozen other splendid qualities, combined! But as for *me*, if he were to be smiled upon in earnest by Blanche, it would be the last gleam of sunshine one of us should see: he never should live to enjoy the happiness of which he had deprived me!"

"Now, Rushton," said Sir Charles, "how unjust, how inconsiderate that is! If Blanche smile on him and not on you, it is a clear proof that she prefers him. Why make her miserable by killing the little man? You might as well shoot her poodle or wring the neck of her canary-bird."

How much farther this dialogue which was hereabouts interrupted, might have been carried, it is not in my power to say; but sufficient has been developed to the reader to show that the incomparable Jack Brag, by dint of the equivocal introduction of his master, Lord Tom Towzle, had obtained footing at least in one respectable and agreeable house. It is, as Sir Charles Lydiard says, a matter of impossibility to ascertain the particular qualities or circumstances by which women of station and talent, as well as their inferiors in rank and intellect, are captivated. Certain it is, that after once Mr. Brag had been admitted to Mrs. Dallington's house, he was a visitor there as frequently as he could contrive to manage it; and, as we have seen, although his other avocations were numerous, he had contrived to unsettle the minds of two most respectable gentlemen of totally different characters and dispositions, both pursuing similar objects by different roads.

We must now recur to Mr. Brag himself, and his career in other places, into which the bright eyes of the gay widow and her lovely sister cannot be expected to penetrate.

CHAPTER II.

WHEN Mr. John Brag left his respected mother, he hurried off to the rendezvous of his sporting friends, whence they proceeded in a body to mark out the line of country for the steeple-chase. In this operation he exhibited, as he fancied, all the tactics of the most experienced quartermaster-general. In endeavouring, however, to elucidate the difficulties of a leap which, he thought essential to the effect of the race, he came somewhat unexpectedly off his horse. A little dirt, and a bruise or two out of sight, of which he gave no evidence, were all the consequences of this performance; and having made every necessary arrangement for the exhibition of the following day, he hastened to a small public-house a little way removed from the high road, which rejoiced in the sign of the "Duke of Marlborough," in order to change his clothes and prepare himself for a flying visit to the shop, to which a promise made to his mother in the morning was carrying him in the afternoon..

When some of Brag's associates in the field questioned him as to his cause of hurry, he made his excuses in so confused a tone, that he left, as he meant to do, an impression upon the minds of his country cronies, that he was under an engagement to the illustrious descendant of the hero of Blenheim and Malplaquet, rather than to the landlord of the house where the pictured warrior swang "high in air" before the door. However, it was all "straight up, right down, and no mistake;" and the pretender "cut 'cross the country" to his hostelry, at which had been deposited his port-manteau "down per toach," which contained his clothes for the two coming days' performances,—his pet scarlet coat and white cords by way of a show, and if necessary a pink silk jacket with yellow sleeves for the steeple-chase.

When he arrived at the goal—the sign of the "Duke of Marlborough," he was surprised to find the only sitting-room of the "hotel" occupied. A stranger, who had been driven into the house for shelter from the "pitiless pelting" of a hail-storm, in which the admirable tallow-chandler had been drenched, was sitting before the fire—agreeable in any season in England, but particularly so in the equivocal weather of a British spring—reading the County Press of the preceding Saturday, redolent of tobacco, and stamped with the circular impressions of sundry pewter-pot bottoms which had reposed upon its columns.

"I say, Stubbs," said our hero, who was known to the landlord as 'the most sportingest gentleman as ever come down to them parts,' "what's this?" "I ordered my dinner this morning"—

(his luncheon with the Duke of Marlborough,)—“and find the room engaged;—what’s this?”

An attempt on the part of Stubbs to soothe the boiling rage of Brag, by sundry qualifying expressions of regret, and a few “I dare says,” and “The gentleman won’t be long,” and several such pacificatory observations, was happily seconded by the occupant of the parlour himself; who upon beholding the inflation of the little Cockney, whose vulgar red and white face was illuminated by the fire which raged within, rose from his seat and said, in the best possible humour, that he feared he was an intruder, but that he had been driven in by stress of weather; that he had ordered some luncheon, which he concluded was nearly ready; and that if the gentleman would permit him to do so, he should be happy to share the repast with him, which, as he seemed to be himself wet and cold, would perhaps not be disagreeable to him.

“Oh,” said Brag, “I’m not the chap to quarrel about trifles: only, I certainly, when I sent my horses down here, did say I should come and dine here; and I have been here often before, and I never was served so till to-day. However, I’m much obliged by your civility, and haven’t the least objection to join you, each of us in course paying, share and share alike.”

“Oh, as you please,” said the stranger, in whose eye there lurked a laughing smile, and who seemed satisfied, by the little he had seen of his new and important acquaintance, that he should find something like amusement in the cultivation of a temporary friendship with him.

“I’ll just step up-stairs,” said Brag, “and cast my skin, as I call it; and by that time, Stubbs, the luncheon will be ready.”

“In five minutes, sir,” said Stubbs.

“I say,” said Brag, as he went along the passage, “who is that chap in the parlour?”

“I haven’t a notion, sir,” said the landlord. “He came here in the midst of that peking hail-storm about half an hour ago, on a fine strong horse which is now in the stable, and which seems to have had a pretty sharpish run somehow; and he ordered a fire to be lighted and some chops to be got ready, and said he would stop an hour or two.”

“No servant?” said Brag.

“No.”

“Don’t carry bags?” asked Brag.

“No,” replied Stubbs.

“Seems genteel,” said the tallow-chandler; “no chance of anything wrong?—plain drest man on a fine horse—eh, don’t you understand? straight up, right down—eh, no mistake. No chance of highwaymen now-a-days?”

“Lor’, no, sir,” said Stubbs; “such a thought never entered

my head. To be sure, he looked at your two hunters in the stable, and asked Jem who they belonged to."

"What did he say?" said Brag.

"To one Squire Brag," said Stubbs; "a gentleman from London."

"Right, quite right," said Brag: "no occasion to tell everybody the truth. And he admired them, did he?"

"Indeed he did," said Stubbs.

"Oh, all right, no mistake," said Brag, delighted to have unconsciously impressed upon the mind of his "promiscuous acquaintance" the character of his pretensions to consideration and his right of swagger. "I'll just go and run my eye over his nag before I go into the parlour, and then we shall be on a footing, eh?"

Stubbs bowed; and Brag proceeded to change his clothes.

While he was performing that operation, the ever-active landlord added another knife and fork to the table already prepared for his other visitor: of which opportunity the stranger availed himself to inquire who the curious little gentleman in the green jacket and white cords might be; and in answer to his question touching that important subject, he was accurately informed by mine host, as far as he knew;—that he was a gentleman of large fortune from the City, he believed, who was in the habit of hunting with all the hounds in the metropolitan counties; that he usually kept his horses there; that he was the owner of the two which the gentleman had so much admired; that he was a choice spirit, and mixed in very high company; all of which information the strange gentleman seemed to receive with considerable satisfaction—probably, as Stubbs the landlord thought, because he should feel himself honoured and gratified by the countenance and society of so distinguished an individual as Brag, and because he inwardly rejoiced at having made a point of showing so much courtesy and attention on his first arrival to a gentleman of such respectability and importance.

The stranger's inquiries and the landlord's elucidations had scarcely ended, before the volatile Cockney made his re-appearance,

"Come, Stubbs," cried he, rubbing his hands as he entered the little sanded parlour, "be alive, my fine fellow! up with the chops! no nonsense—sharp's the word and quick's the motion, eh?—straight up, right down, and no mistake."

"They will be ready in two minutes, sir," said the landlord as he quitted the apartment.

"That's the way I manage 'em," said Brag; "none of your crawlers for me. I dare say you have been waiting ever so long for your feed; they don't mind strangers—everything is habit, sir,—used to me—know I won't stand upon trifles. I pay ready

money, and don't stint—eh? that's the way I keep 'em all alive.—Are you from town to-day?"

"No," said the stranger; "I am on my road across the country. I rode farther than I intended, and was caught in the last storm."

"Oh," said Brag, beginning to exercise what he considered his tact in ascertaining the calling of his companion; "you are not going straight along?"

"No," replied his new friend, "merely taking a canter."

"Blowing away the cobwebs, as my friend Lord Tom Towzle says," said Brag, looking at himself in the miserable glass which surmounted the mantel-shelf, adjusting his shirt-collar, and combing out his curls, of which he was as vain as a peacock of his tail. "I never had harder work: pitched right over my little hack's head, trying to show my friend Lord Wagly, the right-earnest way of taking a double fence. To be sure, it was too much for the poor little thing, and it served me right. I was spilt—up again in a minute—all, as quick as Queen Elizabeth. I say, that's a fine horse of yours in the stable—Stir the fire—hem,—or lend me the poker—eh?—capital nag, I calculate, as the Yankees say?"

"Yes," said the stranger, "a fine serviceable animal: I ride pretty heavy, and require something strong to carry me. You have two clever animals in the boxes here: I assure you I had been admiring them very much before you arrived."

"Yes," said Brag, "nice tits, I flatter myself: I never had two horses that suited me better. I have—let me see—eight—no, nine—yes, nine—much of a muchness; four in Leicestershire, two here, and the rest in London—nursing a bit, that's my way. I say sport's sport—never overwork kind animals—don't break their hearts even if you break their backs. So I keep enough to do it easy: for, as I said to Towzle, what's the use of plenty of money if you don't spend it?—eh! The devil take this fellow! *his* chops are not ready, though ours are—eh! Did you ever hear that before,—deuced good, eh?—old, I guess, and no mistake. I'll just give him a reminder."

Saying which, Brag seized the bell-rope, and gave it so tremendous a jerk, that down it came, bringing with it a cloud of dust, just at the moment that the door opened, and presented to the view of the guests, Stubbs, with the chops, and Rachel his daughter at his heels, bearing a dish of potatoes, and a plate, whereon were deposited two vine leaves of blue ware, filled, the one with gherkins green, the other with walnuts brown.

Rachel was about seventeen, pretty and arch, with a pair of expressively lively black eyes. It was clear that Brag had seen them before, and that Rachel was not altogether insensible of their power; and while the assiduous Stubbs was regulating the plates and knives and forks at their proper angles on the table, the

Nimrod of Cockaigne was slyly pressing the elbow—rather of the reddest—of the amiable Rachel, as she stretched one hand forward towards her unsuspecting parent, in the act of offering him the vegetables wherewith to deck the table. The stranger saw the dexterous manœuvre of his new companion, but appeared to be wholly unconscious of his insinuativeness.

“That’s a pretty girl,” said Brag after the parent and child had left the room—“sly as a pussy cat. Dear me! the things one *does* see in this world! No matter where one goes, it is all the same! One has only to look at a girl, or a woman older a deuced deal, than that, down she comes; I don’t know how it is, or how you find it, but, by Job,” (as Brag always called Jove,) “it’s a difficult thing to keep clear of the female sex; I suppose it’s something in one’s manner—eh,—don’t you think so?—’pon my life I don’t know.”

“Why,” said the stranger, “I am not in the habit of generalizing upon such subjects: a woman worthy of being won is not so easily won.”

“Oh! ah!” said Brag; “you mean tip-toppers, blue-stockings, nobs, and all that kind of thing: I mean the sex taken what I call collectively. What do you drink, eh? Ale, by Job! Here, here, just put your head out of the door and call Stubbs; you are nearer than me: I wish I hadn’t broken the bell. Call him,—or stay;—no, I’ll speak to him,—have up *my* tap—eh,—don’t you see?”

The volubility and vanity of the Cockney amused as well as surprised the stranger, who, upon Brag’s resuming his seat, endeavoured to draw him back—which there was little difficulty in doing—to his old subject, by telling him one of the innumerable *bons mots* of the celebrated Sophie Arnould, who, when a Brag of her day, in descanting largely upon his success with a certain demoiselle of the rank and standing of Rachel Stubbs, told her that the affair had made a great noise in the neighbourhood, asked whether it were not occasioned by the lady’s pattens. Brag did not see the application, and went on, as his acquaintance with his companion grew, and his familiarity ripened, to be extremely communicative, most especially upon his own successes in the way of “Don-Juanism.”

The *sederunt* of the companions was considerably lengthened by a return of bad weather. The rain and hail again poured down in torrents; and Brag, who denounced wine in such a place, resolved upon keeping out the cold with some hot mixture. The stranger, who was also weather-bound, seemed not altogether disinclined to follow his companion’s example; and they drew their chairs towards the fire, in order to wait with patience for a brighter sky; which, as the spring had set in with its accustomed severity, they were not soon certain of seeing.

“I am told,” said a lady of rank to the Persian Ambassador,

who was in this country so many years since, that, for the sake of my female friends, I will not say how many—"I am told, sir, that in *your* country they worship the sun." "True, madam," replied the Ambassador; "and so they would in *yours*, if they ever saw him." The hope of catching a glimpse of him on the day of Brag's adventure at the "Duke of Marlborough" was but faint and remote: the storm pattered against the casements of the humble apartment which he and his associate occupied, and Jack was resolved to show that his spirits, however mercurial, were not altogether dependant upon the weather.

"Blessing, good temper," said Brag,—"eh?—makes no difference to me—life is not long enough to be sorry; clouds or sunshine, on I go, smack, smooth 'cross the country, and no mistake. —As I was saying just now, if I were to write my life and adventures, what a book it would make! to be sure, one could not publish it;—compromise so many dear delicious creatures—eh?"

"But do you find," said the stranger, "this facility of conquest equally general in the higher classes, with whom, as you have already said, you mix?"

"Equal," exclaimed Brag, emptying at the same moment his first glass of Stubbs's punch,—“the same everywhere. I grant you, the females of the aristocracy are more closely watched; the eyes of the world are more on them. But, dear me, when they are out of sight—when we are what I call tiled,—all snug and comfortable, and no mistake,—I think the tip-toppers are livelier than the mediums.”

"And these females, as you call them," said the stranger, "are they most easily led away by person or manner, or accomplishments?"

"A little of all," said Jack, running the dumpy fingers of one of his little fat hands through his curls, and pulling up his shirt-collar with the other as usual;—"manner is everything—that's it, sir; genteel, but bordering upon the lively—eh, don't you understand? Now there's Lady Fanny Smartly, as nice a horse-woman as you'll see in a summer's day;—why, Lor—just see me lend her my arm to mount! Her brother looks with wonder—the groom retires with awe—and then she gives me a smile, as much as to say, 'You are a sharp little fellow, Jack!' Well, then in the evening, there I find her all gentle and languishing—you wouldn't think she had ever seen a horse in her life;—and then she laughs,—and I look, and then she laughs again; and you can't think how one gets on in that way—eh, and no mistake!"

"Lady Fanny Smartly?" said the stranger; "I think I have occasionally seen her riding in London."

"Very likely," said Jack; "but that's not the way to know her. Now there's Mrs. Dallington—a friend of mine, and her sister—

they live close up by Grosvenor Square ;—I go there almost every day ; they are as opposite as light from dark,—one all sharp, you know—sort of daisy-cutting tit—smack smooth, and no mistake ;—the other, Miss Blanche Englefield, all meek, modest, quiet ; what you call retiring, soft, gentle.”

“A melting beauty ?” said the stranger.

“No,” said Jack, colouring ; “not melting ;—a—not that sort of thing,—but—distant, and shy. Why, now with *me*, she is all free and easy. There I see a couple of men day after day dancing attendance upon these two women, and dying to marry them. In course I shouldn’t take any advantage of my friends, as I told Lord Tom—a crack crony of mine—Lord Tom Towzle. I never would—no, I scorn the action,—but it is hard to refrain.”

“Lord Tom Towzle,” said the stranger, “is a son of the Duke of Ditchwater,—is he not ?”

“He is,” said Jack : “I see you know some of their names. Did you ever see Lord Tom ? I always call him Tommy for shortness ;—he is an excellent fellow in his way,—not over respectable in money matters—but an uncommon good un to go ’cross a country.”

“Have you seen much of his aunt, Lady Bloomville ?” said the stranger.

“Oh, the old toad !” said Jack ; “a regular scarecrow,—she is what people call a respectable body—eh ! reads him lectures and all that—he can’t bear her ;—we have a great deal of fun there sometimes—we go and what he calls roast her.”

“I had always heard,” said the stranger, “that she was a remarkably respectable amiable person. I hope you never found her so complying as you seem to have found the rest of your fashionable friends.”

“I tell you what,” said Brag, putting his finger to his nose—“if you knew what I know, you wouldn’t be surprised at anything.”

“She has a brother, hasn’t she ?” said the stranger.

“What, Lady Bloomville ?” asked Jack.

“Yes,” replied the stranger.

“Oh, yes, Lord Ilfracombe,” said Jack ; “and a queer chap he is too.”

“Is he much at Lady Bloomville’s ?” asked the stranger.

“More than we like,” replied Brag ; “he is what I call a dull dog,—good man in his way,—plain, and no show,—none of what I call gammon. I say, I must have another jorum of this stuff—put your head out and call, will you—eh ! make yourself useful—nothing like sociability, and no mistake—eh !”

The stranger obeyed, and called the waiter ; Rachel appeared, and Jack ordered a replenishment of punch, in doing which, having previously expressed his admiration of the waitress, he suited the action to the word, and then resumed.

"Old Ilfracombe is a queer one," said he, "a bore,—won't sit after dinner. Now, as I say to Lord Tom, that is a fault of the young ones;—no conversation,—no nothing now—up go the ladies, and then comes 'Will anybody have any more wine, or shall we have coffee?' and up we go after them,—no opportunity for what somebody calls the feast of reason and the flow of soul, or, as I read it, 'flow of bowl,'—eh!"

"So then," said the stranger, "this Lord Ilfracombe is what may be called a wet blanket!—he doesn't look like one of the Kill-joys."

"Do you think not?" said Jack. "I suppose you have only seen him by chance, at some public dinner, or somewhere where smiles are always ready. If you knew him as well as I and Lord Tom do, you would set him down for as great a bore as ever lived."

"And is Lord Tom, as you call him," said the stranger, "in ve with either of the ladies you have mentioned to me?"

"Not a bit," said Jack. "Tommy and I—or rather, I might say, I and Tommy, take a different course,—butterflies, bees,—eh!—don't you see?—rove and sip—and no mistake. No, I think it would be an injustice in either of us to marry. But there are two very respectable men dangling—you understand what I mean."

"Perfectly," said the stranger.

"But," said Brag, "it is painful to see it—eh!—Lord bless your heart—however—Oh! here is my second glass—put it down, Rachel,—here—come round—this way,—don't be frightened, the gentleman won't eat you."

Rachel did as she was bid, but it was quite clear by the expression of her pretty countenance as she left the room, that she did not think quite so much of Brag as Brag thought of himself.

"If you," said Brag, "had opportunities as I have of seeing the best society,—what I call skimming the cream, you would be in the secret; but without seeing it, as I said before, there's no believing it—eh!"

"I am sure you are right," said the stranger. "I think Lord Ilfracombe has a son, hasn't he?"

"To be sure he has," said Brag, "Lord Dawlish,—and a nice chap he is too; he married a Miss Linton, the daughter of a country gentlemen in my lord's neighbourhood. I know all the facts from Lord Tommy. She is like a dol in a toy-shop window—waxy winky-eyed—eh! You understand—money—the father sold the child to buy the title, and a pretty swop too. Lord bless you! they live like cat and dog. I can't bear her—mawkish—eh! Don't you take some more of this mixture?"

"Not yet," said the stranger. "And does Lord Dawlish mix much in your sports?"

"Why now," said Jack, "before you carry this on too far, I do think you ought to tell me why you ask. I don't think it fair, living with these people as I do, what you call hand-in-glove, and all that, to let out; you may perhaps, have an interest in knowing particulars. I am sure you won't be offended, but I take it that you are in the mercantile line, and what people in the city call travelling on your own bottom—you want to know where credit may and where it mayn't be given—eh? I don't think I ought to commit my friends, old cocky—eh! all right and no mistake—don't you think so?"

"Certainly," said the stranger; "I didn't know that Lord Dawlish was a friend of yours."

"The whole clique," said Brag, looking very cunning; "and can tell you this—they *know* I am rich, eh!—all snug, smug, a n no mistake."

"Well," said the stranger, "I am much obliged for the mixture of confidence in *me*, and the consideration of *them*, which regulates your communications;—but I suppose old Ilfracombe himself is a steady goer?"

"Umph!" said Jack, "pretty well—six o' one side and half-a-dozen of the other—much of a muchness—you understand, eh!—all outside—plating, as I call it."

Here the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Stubbs, who announced that Mr. Brag's groom had just arrived from London, on the top of the coach, which had set him down at the corner of the cross road.

"Let him come in," said Brag, with an air of the most exalted dignity.

The lad made his appearance, dripping, like Niobe, all tears.

"Well, what made you so late?" said Brag.

"Couldn't git down afore, sir," said the lad.

"Well," said his master, "go get yourself something to eat, and see to the horses."

"I wanted to say a word about the horses, sir,—please," said the lad.

"Well," said Brag, "you may say what you have to say; you are not afraid of that stranger, I suppose."

"No, sir," said the boy, "I'm not afraid o' anybody, but I didn't know I was to say what I had to say, out."

"Say," said Jack, waving his half-emptied tumbler over his head—"Say on," as the chap at the theatre says."

"Mr. Figgs," said the boy, "wishes to know whether you want both them ere horses as is here any longer this week, or if one will do, as he has an opportunity of letting one or both on 'em to

gemmen as pays ready money; and if so be you keeps 'em both, you 'll be pleased to send up the stumpy by to-night's post."

"Ha, ha, ha!" said Brag, his cheeks turning as white as chalk, his hair seeming to uncurl, and his whole countenance assuming the appearance of a detected pickpocket—"how good!—how deuced good, eh! Ha, ha,—what! my own horses!"

"Not your own horses, sir," said the boy, "they are *his* horses, you know, sir, and—"

"Hold your tongue, sir," said Brag; "I think I ought to know whose horses they are better than he;—get out,—go and look after the nags—before you get anything to eat—and I will come out to you presently."

Of all the cur unhung, there is none so awfully contemptible as a drivelling braggart. The wretched cockney seemed to quail before his associate, whom, as we know, he imagined to be either a rider to some respectable house in the button line, or a small dealer travelling, as he called it, "on his own bottom." He watched the glance of the eye of this man, whom he had before despised and bullied, to see what impression the detection of his miserable assumptions had made upon him; but the stranger, who had his own business to attend to, and who seemed fully occupied by his own thoughts, evinced no alteration either in look or manner when he heard his contemptible companion exposed by the stable-keeper's menial. Why he was not much affected by this *dénouement*, we may perhaps shortly discover.

"What fools servants are!" said Jack, when he *could* speak—stirring up a bit of lemon-peel from the bottom of his glass, and keeping his eyes steadily fixed upon the object and operation during the utterance of his remark.

What the stranger thought of masters, was not to be collected from either his words or his looks.

"Figgs is a fool too," said Brag, when he had rallied; "I wonder what *he* means."

The stranger, who merely recollected the history of his companion's stud, all elaborately detailed, did not by any means exert himself to elucidate the mysteries of the liveryman's stables. He was perfectly satisfied with the affair as it stood, and there an end.

"I believe," said Brag, breaking what appeared a most uncomfortable silence, and which, as pretenders invariably do, he fancied arose from a conviction in the other gentleman's mind that he was a "humbug,"—I believe that these fellows try to worry one into buying, by such tricks as these: however, I flatter myself I am pretty well known about London, and if I have any interest with the Master of the horse, not one of Figgs's animals sets foot into the Royal stables,—there I *have* an influence."

The stranger merely looked, and finished his one glass of Stubbs's particular, to Brag's two; which one he had been persuaded to imbibe upon the very just principle of repelling external cold by internal warmth. It was clear that the cockney had been hit hard by the stupidity of his boy, as he called him—who, in fact, was not his; and odd enough to say, however pleased he might have been to escape anything like a cross-examination from his companion, he was rather vexed than not, that the said companion did not appear to take sufficient interest in his proceedings to inquire any farther into particulars.

"The weather does not seem to clear up," said the stranger, walking towards the window; "I am not quite sure what is best to be done."

"As for me," said Brag, "I shall be a fixture for the night, if it holds on so badly."

"I must get home by dinner-time," said the stranger.

"Oh!" said Brag, "then this is not your dinner."

"No," said the stranger. "I believe in point of fact it is, but nominally it is not; I have fifteen miles to ride before I get home. I suppose one might on an emergency get a chaise here?"

"Not here," said Brag; "I am always obliged, when I want horses, to send down to the George,—two miles from this;—but that makes no difference, I'll tell my boy to run down if you want them:—are you going towards town?"

"No," said the stranger, and stranger he was in those parts, "my course is *from* London."

"Eh! oh!" said Brag, evidently desirous of finding out his associate's pursuits. "I shall cobble up here for the night, I think;—I dare say Rachel will make my tea for me, and I shall be uncommon comfortable, and no mistake. I like the—what do the French call it?—the '*despistere in pocco*,' or something of that sort, as Lord Tommy says;—so here I stop. I have nothing to do, no business, no call, no tie, except that unhappy Mrs.—did I tell you her name?—yes I did,—Mrs. Dallington and her sister Blanche. They must wait—can't ride through the rain for them, eh!"

At this moment a remarkably neat, well appointed travelling carriage, drawn by four bright bays, preceded by an outrider, and in the rumble of which were two strapping servants, drove up to the door of the small ostelry—the steeds all thorough bred, were foaming and champing the bit, and the party within evidently in high spirits. The halt was called just to wash out the mouths of the horses, which were, as it appeared, making a long stage.

"I say," said Brag, "these are somebodies:—what nags!—did you ever see such a turn out;—that's what I call going it—straight

up, right down, and no mistake. Let's just go out and have a look at 'em."

Brag led the way—the stranger implicitly followed; the moment he exhibited his person by the side of the cockney, a shout of surprise and delight echoed from the carriage.

"So, here you are!" cried the youngest of the *partie carrée*. "What *have* you been doing here?"

"Doing!" said the stranger; "why you don't expect a man to ride to an archery meeting through a torrent!"

"My dear love," said a lady in the carriage, "are you quite sure you have not got wet?"

"Not the least," said the stranger; "for I took the precaution of halting here, and getting some luncheon in very agreeable society. But, perhaps, you will let *me* in turn inquire why you have taken this road."

"Partly, I believe," said a young man who turned out to be the stranger's son, "by mistake,—the weather was so desperate that the whole affair was a *coup manqué*, and we were glad enough to scramble away as well as we could; but, however, you will now come with *us*; they say it is an ill wind that blows nobody good."

"You may rely upon my housing myself in the carriage," said the stranger, "even at the hazard of crowding you. Harrison, stay behind, and bring home my horse in the course of the evening, and pay my bill here; don't hurry back, for I rode rather hard in coming."

The ladies seemed delighted at the acquisition which they had made to their party "inside," and the stranger, with his foot on the step of the carriage, took off his hat and made a low bow to Brag, who stood looking on in a state of amaze and wonderment arising from the extraordinary fact, that anybody who really lived in the society of which he was permitted to catch occasional glimpses, could seriously sit down and enjoy mutton chops in a small alehouse, without disclosing his rank or talking of his connexions.

The carriage drove off,—splashed a little of the mud upon Brag's delicate nose, and left, according to the stranger's directions, one of the servants behind, who, upon scanning the figure of the cockney sportsman, turned away from him with an air of dignity which his master had never assumed; and whose remarkably smart leathers and tops were so much better "got up" than Brag's ever were, (although when he wore leathers he always devoted a certain portion of the morning to his own personal care of them,) that the unhappy creature cowered before the menial of the man, whom because he was plainly dressed, and assumed nothing in his manner, he had treated as if he were an inferior.

"I say, sir," said Brag to the man as he was walking towards the stable, "may I ask who the gentleman is, who stepped into that carriage, and has left you to take home his horse?"

"That's *my* lord," said Harrison, so was the man named.

"And what lord may he be?" said Brag.

"Don't you know *my* lord, sir?" said Harrison; "I thought everybody knew him,—Lord Ilfracombe. That's my Lady, and his son Lord Dawlish, and Lady Dawlish, and Lady Bloomville, in the carriage."

"Indeed! five insides!" said Brag: "and who was the young lady with the veil?"

"Lady Fanny Smartly," said the man, and passed on to look after his lord's horse.

Jack stood as if petrified: he felt his ears tingle, his knees shake, —the mingled impudence and folly of his conduct came full upon him, like a double-headed shot. Here were all his intimate friends whom he had never seen before, conjured up, as if were, to ruin him in the estimation of the head of the family, whom he had denounced to himself as a queer one, a bore, a kill-joy, and a wet blanket. He had not the power to stir, nor would he have moved from the place where he stood, with his eyes swimming and his head whirling, if the stable-boy from Figg's had not just begged him to make up his mind as to the horse he would keep.

Jack, for a minute roused to a sense of his absurdity, gave his answer, and retired to the house; where having in due time recovered the spirits or callousness which generally upheld him, he rang for some tea,—a beverage in which the subjects of Cockaigne delight, and which was in the course of half-an-hour brought him by a dirty red-headed boy; Rachel Stubbs having gone over to her aunt's, on purpose to get out of the way of his nasty impertinences.

CHAPTER III.

BRAG's feelings at the period of this announcement were by no means of the most agreeable character. It was quite certain that the scene which had just been enacted by the noble lord and himself would furnish materials for a *historiette* in his lordship's circle, whence it would infallibly descend to the sphere of his own actions, as fashions gradually sink from the duchess to the dowdy, until, as extremes meet, they become extinct from their universality.

Then, for the Lothario to be slighted—avoided—cut by the waiting-girl of a small inn, who ought to have been prouder than a peacock at having attracted his eyes; altogether Jack was ill at

case, and fell to ruminating upon his present not brilliant prospects, until he fell asleep.

Not so his mother. She had pondered the words her son had spoken: she felt that his recommendation to take unto herself a second husband, although she had passed several years of widowhood, was not altogether unreasonable, since the career which he appeared determined to pursue, let it terminate as it might, was not very likely to end in a steady settle-down to business, and since, as everybody allows, a "lone woman" in trade is liable to be imposed upon.

It is odd enough, that an idea once formed in a mind where it never had place before, becomes the leading subject of thought and consideration. Mrs. Brag had never dreamt of a second marriage; and it is but fair to say, that none of her male, middle-aged, marrying acquaintance had ever, by word or deed, led her to moot the question. It was reserved for her son to fire the train; and from the moment it was ignited, Mrs. Brag became a different woman. She bestowed extra care upon her frill and her front; had the one plaited, and the other curled, with peculiar pains; took to the wearing of coloured ribands; looked into the shop whenever she heard the sound of voices; and, in short, gave herself more airs than she had ever thought of assuming for many years before.

Never, however, had she been driven into what may be called a resolution upon the subject, until the morning upon which this little history opens. Johnny had often suggested the measure, and she had at first repelled the idea, out of respect to the departed Mr. B.; at last, she listened more complacently; then, as I have just said, she occupied herself in putting the scheme in execution practically; and after that morning, finding that all solicitations to John in regard of steadiness must prove fruitless, she came to a resolution of obliging her darling boy, of whom she might justly have said—

"Johnny, with all thy faults, I love thee still,"

and of making herself more comfortable at home. How to compass the affair then became her only consideration; for the reader ought to know, that although to the very last she maintained her profession of disinclination for the step, she had, in fact, determined upon taking it. The way she went to work will hereafter be developed.

The volatile John, himself, arose on the morning of his intended steeple-chase, little refreshed from the sort of feverish night's rest he had enjoyed—if enjoyment it might be called. He could not rally from the effects of his self-exposure, which affected him the more strongly, as he began to anticipate (since it was evident that they were staying somewhere in the neighbourhood) the appearance of some of the branches of the noble family of Ilfracombe to

witness what men of desperate expedients consider "fine sport." What should he do if this very Lord Dawlish were to join the field, attended perhaps by Lady Fanny Smartly, or the earl himself? Every word that he had uttered the previous night would, of course, be repeated; and if not actually kicked or horsewhipped by the indignant viscount, in revenge for the description he had given of his father and his family, even Lord Tom Towzle himself, who was his main-stay, might join in the general execration of the pretender; the more especially as Lord Tom had at various times borrowed sundry sums of Brag's "loose cash," and, having been of late refused unlimited access to his purse, might perhaps not be particularly sorry to find a cause for breaking off his acquaintance with him.

The day however came, and Brag having breakfasted, began to rally; and resolving to put the best face upon the affair, he mounted the horse he kept, and proceeded to the scene of action, casting his eyes, it must be admitted, in every direction, in dread of encountering his friend of the preceding afternoon. Nothing of the sort, however, occurred to annihilate him; and when he reached the inn at which the sportsmen were to rendezvous, and found Lord Tom and his associates just the same as usual,—all gay, lively, and warm in their reception,—he felt reassured, and in less than an hour had forgotten, or resolved not to remember, anything about his self-exposure to the noble lord.

The steeple-chase took place according to notice; and at its conclusion Lord Tom, assisted by Brag, furnished a report of it for the "Sporting Intelligence" of the London papers, in the following words:—

"This event came off yesterday to the entire gratification of the numerous company who were present.

"The course had been marked out on the previous day by Lord Wagley, Lord Thomas Towzle, and Mr. Brag, who judiciously selected a stiff line of country, including thirty-four leaps and three brooks, best calculated to try the mettle of both horses and riders. The winning-post was between two flags placed in a field belonging to Mr. Brag, who was also appointed umpire. Five horses started—

"Mr. Tagrag's 'Washball'	<i>Owner.</i>
Capt. Snobb's 'Beggarboy'	<i>Owner.</i>
Sir Frederic Flapper's 'Stumpy,'	<i>Mr. Martingale.</i>
Mr. Smith's 'Tommy'	<i>Owner.</i>
Colonel Ball's 'Blunderbuss'	<i>Mr. Flint.</i>

"They all went off at a slashing pace. 'Tommy' refused the second leap, and threw his rider over his head, and, falling backwards over the bank, broke his back, and died in a few minutes.

'Washball' was also unlucky in trying to jump a brook, which her rider did not know was fordable twenty yards lower down: she slipped her shoulder, and was obliged to be shot immediately after the race. We are sorry to add, that Mr. Tagrag, who rode her, unfortunately pitched upon the back of his neck, and severely injured his spine. He lies at the 'Full Moon' at Wigglesford, without hopes of recovery,

"After these little mishaps, the play was made entirely by 'Beggaboy' and 'Stumpy,' 'Blunderbuss' having knocked up after the first two miles and a half, and being run to a dead stand in the middle of a ploughed field, whence neither flogging nor spurring could move him: in fact, the shine was taken out of him, and it became a clear case of 'no go.'

"'Beggaboy' and 'Stumpy' had had enough of it; and when they reached the last fence, entered the winning-field nearly neck-and-neck. 'Stumpy' tumbled into the ditch, and Captain Snobbs worked 'Beggaboy' through the flags in very fine style. 'Stumpy' was considerably damaged by the last fall, which is a pity, inasmuch as he is about one of the best horses in this part of the country.

"The race was for ten sovereigns each, and was run in an incredibly short space of time. The numerous company assembled were highly delighted with the spirit-stirring sport, and, after the chase, proceeded to a field at the back of the 'Full Moon,' to see the ties shot off of the great pigeon match between Mr. Slack and Mr. Nibbs, for a silver jug and cover.

"The name of Nibbs in itself was sufficient to create an unusual interest, and the ground was crowded with amateurs. The terms were, twenty-one yards at twenty-one birds—charge limited to two ounces. Betting, three to one the winner killed eighteen—five to four on Nibbs. They both went in, sure of doing the trick; but after Slack and Nibbs had each killed twelve birds, Nibbs had it all his own way, and won the jug by five birds, killing nineteen to Slack's fourteen; thus winning the by-bets of three to one. Several other matches came off, and about a hundred and fifty pigeons were knocked over.

"Nothing could exceed the gaiety of the scene. The weather was remarkably fine, and a proportion of the beauties who had honoured the race with their presence, were witnesses of the cheering sport. An old woman standing just outside the enclosure, received a whole charge of shot in her face, which is likely to cost her the sight of one eye at least; and a silly boy, who imprudently attempted to knock down one of the winged birds which was falling out of bounds, was badly wounded in the chest and throat. He was immediately attended to by the surgeon of the place, who extracted thirty-six shots from different parts of his person, and he was then forwarded in an easy cart to the county hospital. We hope these

accidents will act as cautions to other equally inconsiderate individuals.

"At the conclusion of the sports an admirable cold collation was served up at the 'Full Moon,' in Bunks's best style. The evening passed off in the most delightfully convivial manner, and arrangements were made for a renewal of the exhilarating diversion of the day, on Thursday next, when a still more numerous assemblage is anticipated."

This animated description, as a matter of course, figured in the principal journals of the following morning, Brag having succeeded in the interpolation of three or four words, conveying to himself a field, and, by implication, a much more extensive estate, in a part of the country where he did not possess even so much as called him master at his "little place in Surrey." The only drawback to his happiness, however, upon this occasion, was a visit, three days after the appearance of the intelligence, from the farmer to whom the field actually did belong, who gave him to understand that he had directed his attorney to prosecute the trespassers, who without his permission had ploughed up his land at a season when it did not require tillage; and having ascertained by the newspapers that the whole arrangements had devolved upon Mr. Brag, the attorney thought it most advisable to pounce upon *him* in the first instance.

This visit, and the intelligence his visitor conveyed to him, were anything but agreeable to the little man, whose feelings upon the matter were in no degree tranquillized by the conviction that his difficulties and responsibility were fastened upon him, because he could not refrain from the indulgence of his besetting propensity, in making himself not only the hero of the affair, but the owner of the ground over which it had been decided.

The next race, however, which Mr. Brag was destined to run, was away from the lawyer, and accordingly, with prudence, which in animals unclothed, we designate instinct, but which in cases like that of Johnny we by courtesy call reason, our hero quitted his headquarters at the Duke's Head, and proceeded to town per stage-coach; the second message from Mr. Figgs, with regard to the horses, having been accompanied with a peremptory demand that they might both be sent back.

Brag returned to town considerably damaged, and however bold he might be in assuming consequence, and claiming friendships, never did human being more clearly evince, by his personal appearance, the workings of what served him for mind, than he; a blow like that which he had just received from the farmer's announcement completely upset him, and in five minutes the sprightly, pert, impudent-looking wagling was metamorphosed into a pale, down-cast, miserable victim; and in a plight thus indicative of defeat,

he reached the metropolis, quite undecided how to dispose of himself for the afternoon.

While he is in this state of suspense let us look for one moment at those over whose destinies he almost unconsciously possessed a most extraordinary influence. Sir Charles Lydiard, whose sensitiveness had once been disturbed, and whose shyness had been excited by Rushton's observations upon the manner in which Brag was received at Mrs. Dallington's, could not get rid of the impression which he had at first so hesitatingly received. None who have not felt jealousy—and, since there never can be love without it, who has not?—can imagine the pains which a patient once infected with the disease, the jaundice of the mind, incessantly takes to keep up its virulence. It so happened, that Sir Charles had never seen Brag since his conversation with Rushton, and therefore had no opportunity of watching the "telegraph" of which they had upon that occasion spoken; but upon a reference to all that *had* passed, he managed to combine a thousand "trifles light as air," an infinity of nothings, the consideration of which produced an increased exhibition of coldness and reserve during his next two or three calls at the widow's.

Mrs. Dallington saw this accession of frigidity, and without exactly hitting upon its true cause, did certainly "telegraph" Blanche into an observance of it. This new glance gave new grounds for doubts and apprehensions, and the worthy baronet passed four miserable hours in the boudoir of the woman he best loved in the world, if he had but known it, devoutly wishing to make his escape, but fearing to move lest an *éclaircissement* should take place.

Sir Charles felt more embarrassed from the fact that he had *not* seen his aversion during his last one or two visits; and because he was extremely anxious to know the cause of an absence on his part longer than usual; and because, above all, he could not induce himself to make the smallest inquiry after him. Other men called, joined in the conversation, and relieved Sir Charles from the restraint under which the dread of a serious explanation kept him whenever the temporary absence of Blanche reduced the circle to a *tête-à-tête*; but the appearance of none of those worried or annoyed him. Mrs. Dallington's manner, kind to all, was in no degree particular to any one of them; but certainly, now that Rushton had concurred with him in his views upon the subject, he *did* think that Brag was very differently treated by both ladies. Still, he could not descend to touch upon the topic; and after a feverish sitting on the third morning after Brag's departure, Sir Charles left the widow's to dress for dinner, pleading an engagement which he had not, for declining an invitation from her and her sister to dine with them, which he would have been, if he could have commanded his feelings, too happy to accept.

Rushton, who had been there, but was also absent in the evening, became more actively employed in Brag's business than his cold and calculating colleague. In passing Grosvenor Street he encountered Brag proceeding to visit his door-plate and inquire for letters, just arrived from the Duke of Marlborough, having been let out of the coach (in the inside of which he travelled to avoid the farmer's lawyer) at the corner of a back street in the Edgeware Road, so as not to be detected in his descent; by which ingenious device, and the exhibition of a whip in his hand and a pair of spurs on his heels, the pretender let it be inferred that he had ridden up to town upon one of the nine horses, which did not belong to him.

Rushton welcomed his *friend* to London; and anxious to ascertain, if he could, whether he proposed making an evening visit to Mrs. Dallington's, joined him in his walk down the street.

"Just returned?" said Rushton.

"This minute dismounted," said Brag; "capital sport;—never better!—all smack smooth, and no mistake. Killed two horses outright, and one man, I fancy; however, he was well picked up, and the doctor has got him in charge."

"Much company?" said Rushton.

"Lots of people," answered Brag, who, unable to repress that which was certainly true, however dangerous the allusion to the family might be elsewhere; "I myself did not stay at Wigglesford I had rooms at the inn where my horses stand. All quiet, snug no nonsense;—civil people; good landlord; pretty daughter, eh!—you understand—no mistake!"

"Were you alone, then?" said Rushton.

"Not altogether," said Brag; "old Ilfracomb dined with me. He was going to an archery-meeting to join his family. Weather turned out bad; took part of my little dinner;—humble fare—mere soup, fish, cutlet and capon. The rest of the party joined us after dinner. Dawlish and his wife, and Lady Sarah Smartly—they did not get out of the carriage.—so I packed him off, and returned to finish my claret, and wind up the evening in *my* way, eh?"

"Are you going to the widow's this evening?" said Rushton.

"Not certain," said Brag: "I'm rather tired, and more than half engaged. How is Sir Charles? Cold chap, that, eh? Don't you think so?"

"Why," said Rushton, "a trifle upsets him. He is the most delicate-minded man I ever met with: an expression, a word, a look affects him in a way one could scarcely imagine."

"Proud, eh?" said Brag. "Distant, eh?"

"No," replied Rushton. "There is a coldness in his manner, I admit; and those who do not know him may fancy this proceeds from *hauteur*; but the fact is, that however much he may warm in

the course of the evening, he falls back to his original state of chilliness the next morning, and requires a new process to *dégeler* him. He is not therefore popular, but, in truth, his apparent coldness has its origin in diffidence and a distrust of himself."

"Oh! that's diffidence, is it?" said Brag. "I can't say I quite understand *that*: I thought it was pride—but for *that*, in course I don't care one farthing, and no mistake."

It all at once struck Rushton (Sir Charles having naturally, although unexpectedly, become the subject of their conversation) that the present would be a favourable opportunity of sounding (the water not being very deep) the views and intentions of his communicative friend.

"Why," said he, "to tell you the truth, Brag, I do not think *you* a fair judge of Sir Charles. I have my quarrels with him upon different shades of feeling; but you—you are totally different."

"I don't see that," said Brag. "It's all one to me, you know. I don't care a fig, as I say to Lord Tom: take me as I am, eh!—all right up, straight down, no mistake. I quite agree with you in differing with *him*; but I don't see how *my* case differs from *yours*."

"Ah!" said Rushton, "there it is; it is in that difference all the difference lies."

"How d'ye mean?" said Brag.

"He is afraid of you," replied his companion.

"Afraid of *me*!" said Brag, pulling up his shirt collar, "that's too good."

"You are too civil by half to the widow," said Rushton.

"Me!"

"Yes," said Rushton, "and what is even more to the purpose, he thinks she is too civil by half to you."

"Upon your honour!" said Brag, in an ecstasy of delight—"afraid of *me*! Come, come—eh!—that's too good!"

"Not a bit too good," said Rushton. "I tell you what it is—I'll be candid with you—I am just as much afraid of you myself."

"You, Rushton!" said Brag.

"Yes, more than Sir Charles is," replied Rushton. "Recollect now—remember—think how you go on with Blanche Englefield—a being all shyness and reserve with everybody else, is with *you*, animated and evidently interested in your conversation."

"You don't mean that *you* are afraid of *me*, too," said Brag, fully convinced of the entire seriousness of the conversation, which after all contained more of real apprehension than Rushton would have willingly had him know. "I certainly have a way, eh!—I don't know what it is—it cannot be person—manner, I suppose. I am always ready to talk, eh! The tongue is the very deuce in a sharp fellow's head—a little repartee, and all that, eh!—small-talk, and a good deal of it—that's it."

"Clearly," said Rushton.

"The women like little parties," said Brag—"fêtes—water excursions—*déjeûners*, and all that. Then they get so good-humoured; and the champaign—and the return—and the moonlight—and the music, and all *that*."

"You have not yet opened your battery in that line," said Rushton.

"Waiting for weather," said Brag. "I'll show you the way to do that sort of thing as soon as summer is well in, eh!—and then, I think, you *will* have the heart-ache."

"Are you, then, so general a lover?" said Rushton. "Will neither content your love of conquest? Must you win both?"

"Oh! come," said Brag, putting his finger to his nose, and winking, "you are playing your tricks—what do *they care for me*?"

"That remains to be seen," said Rushton. "My firm belief is, that you may obtain the hand of either of them; and my opinion, moreover, is, that if you have not serious intentions that way, as far as one of them is concerned, you do an injustice to both, by acting towards them as you do."

"Upon your life!" said Jack—"you are serious?"

"Perfectly," said Rushton; "however, this is entirely between ourselves: and whatever step you take, let me just mention, that the widow is much the more lively companion of the two, and has rather the better fortune; so turn your basilisk eyes towards her, and leave the poor silent, sighing Blanche for me. Adieu! Here we are at your door—you are at home. Do me the favour to remember what I have said, and as you are great be merciful."

Saying which, Rushton quitted his friend, who was completely overset by the announcement of the opinion he had just heard delivered. It took very little to convince him of his power over what he called the "female sex," and he had certainly for some time felt very much inclined to coincide with Rushton in his views upon this particular point. But then came the question—Which of the prizes should he take?—which of the lovers should he immolate? Lydiard, he was assured, was too cold and odd to charm the widow, and Rushton too violent and jealous to be agreeable as a husband to Blanche. The notion once put into his head, operated there like that with which he had a short time before possessed his respectable mother on a similar subject, and all that now remained for him to do was to make up his mind for a decision. That he *did* decide, the reader is destined soon to see; how, for the present, must remain a secret.

There certainly is one part of the affair which did not make itself evident to him. Blinded by his vanity, he did not perceive that the whole object Rushton had in view in acknowledging his own fears, which he really fancied had some foundation, and in encouraging his pretensions, was the expulsion of the little man altogether; for

although he had succeeded in awakening Sir Charles's suspicions, and Sir Charles had been equally fortunate in arousing *his*, and that he had moreover discovered, by Brag's manner and admission, that the widow was, at least of the two, the present object of his admiration, he felt perfectly satisfied that he would receive his *congée* the very hour in which he made a formal declaration, and thus, without appearing in the business, he should be relieved from all farther apprehensions from his presence, while the affair of his expulsion would, in fact, be that of Lydiard and the widow.

Brag, however, was about to be entangled in another little business, which promised to interfere with the immediate execution of his plan. He had resolved upon repairing to his "little place in Surrey," in order to look after certain affairs which were essential to the production of the means for "carrying on the war," and afterwards proposed, at least when it should be sufficiently dark for the purpose—to visit his mother, who, wisely enough, took care of the shop as far as her abilities would permit her to watch one or two clerks and shopmen, who undoubtedly, seeing that she was a "lone woman," did every day that, of which, in her own phrase, she was so much afraid "put upon her;" which phrase, rendered into plain English, means, cheat her out of her property whenever they were able.

As our story expands, it may be necessary here to observe, that Mrs. Brag had a daughter, the sister of John, who had never been a favourite with her father. People said her temper was bad : some people said one thing, and other people, as they will do, said other things : certain it is, that home was no home for her. And after a sort of half-and-half education at a suburban boarding-school, where she learned astronomy, the mathematics, netting, knitting, knotting, the use of the globes, dancing geometry, drawing, embroidery, rug-working, purse-making, flower-painting, botany, singing, geology, plain needle-work, natural history, stencilling, Italian, French, Spanish, and German, the harp, guitar, piano forte, tambourine, and triangle, together with many other sciences and accomplishments, "too numerous for the brief space of an advertisement," she early in life married hastily, and clandestinely, a gentleman in the army of the name of Brown. His military duties had since called him to India, where his regiment had now been for several years. Of him or his sister, Jack seldom spoke, and, when he did, coldly referred to her husband as the major. Any little uneasiness which her father had evinced about the marriage at the period at which it occurred, had been decently buried in oblivion by the fond mother and her son, who, whatever other feelings might have prompted him to this acquiescence in the affair it could not be doubted was in a considerable

degree acted upon by a desire to say nothing whatever about it.

There was, however, a person for whom, in earlier life, and before the doting fondness of his sire had spoiled him, he did feel as deep an interest as such a mind as his was capable of—this was no other than the major's sister, Miss Brown—Anne christened but called familiarly in those times Nancy Brown. It does not sound romantic by way of a name, but what is in a name?

At the time of Brag's acquaintance with her, she was a lovely girl just eighteen, fair as the lily and fresh as the rose. Her mother was an humble personage, no better, let it be understood, than a dress-maker, to whom this daughter was assistant; for, lest we should ourselves fall into the errors of which Brag was guilty, it may be as well to observe, that the military functionary with whom Kitty became enamoured, and who had the honour of leading her to the Hymeneal altar without her father's consent derived his rank of major from Brag himself; in giving him which brevet he felt himself probably justified, inasmuch as it was derived from a mere abbreviation of his real title. Brown was serjeant-major in the regiment to which he belonged; but the omission of one half of his official denomination was adopted very early by Jack, with, it must be confessed, the full acquiescence of his father, who never could think of the misbehaviour of Kitty in making such a match, with common patience.

When his father died, Johnny, as will be seen hereafter, became so fine a gentleman, that he never paid the least further attention either to Nancy Brown or the promises he had so earnestly made her; judge, then, the surprise and mortification which overwhelmed the vain and foolish creature when his mother, after the usual greetings upon his arrival at home, placed in his hands a letter from his poor suffering victim.

To describe the face or the feelings of Brag when this appeal from his once dear Anne was handed to him by his respected parent, (who was not entirely aware of the real state of the case, but believed the communication, in all probability, to have some reference to her daughter, whom she in her heart had, with a mother's feelings, forgiven,) would be impossible. To come from a question of supplanting Sir Charles Lydiard in the good graces of Mrs. Dallington, to a letter from Nancy Brown of Walworth, was indeed a sinking in the sublime. He turned pale, as usual; then flushed; then his lips quivered, and his eyes opened; and then, without saying one syllable, he thrust the paper unopened into his pocket, where it shall remain until a new chapter gives us space for its perusal.

CHAPTER IV.

THE letter which Jack, having hastily glanced at the superscription, thrust out of sight, follows.

“Walworth, Tuesday.

“DEAR JOHN,—I hope you will not be angry with me for writing to-day. You remember what day it is? I think I need not remind you that it is your poor Anne’s birthday. For three or four years after Katharine’s marriage with George, and their departure for the Indies, you used to write to *me* on this day, but you afterwards left off doing so; and I should not perhaps have broken in upon you now if the anniversary had been as bright and as cheering as it once used to be. No, my dear John, ‘hope deferred maketh the heart sick;’ and although I have by this time learned to give up all expectation of your fulfilling your promises made to me before our father’s death, I neither have forgotten my affection for *you*, nor mean to upbraid you with your forgetfulness of *me*.

“When we were so much together, and when you said you could be happy with nobody else, and told me of your dread of your father’s anger, which he had indeed shown by never seeing poor Katharine after her marriage with my brother George, you led me to believe that the old gentleman’s objections were the only obstacles in the way of our marriage. I lived on—not in hopes of his death for I could not be so wicked as to hope for that—but I lived on, certain that, when it should please Providence to take him, you would fulfil your promise and redeem your pledge. He died, John, but you came not to me, wrote not to me. Day after day I watched; listened to every knock at the door, fancying it might be you; and every time I saw the postman coming towards our lodging, my heart beat because I thought he might bring me a letter from you.

“A year passed away, and then, as you know, I wrote to you, rather because I had heard from George and your sister, and wished you to have news of them, which I knew you could not otherwise get, than to worry you with my own importunities. You answered *that* letter, but you came not yourself, neither did the letter which you wrote contain one kind word, or one allusion to other days, now past and gone. Yet I complained not. I heard of you in gay parties and gay places; I sighed to think how far we were parted, and perhaps I cried, John: but you were happy and prosperous, and doing well in the world; and I could only blame myself for having, when a girl, been so foolish as to fancy that you cared for me enough to make me your wife.

"Six years and two months this very day was the first time we met, and God knows, although I have felt sorrow and sadness enough since, it seems to me as if it were but yesterday. It was to oblige and serve your sister Katharine, who was my friend, that I walked out with her, when she used to meet George. I did not see any harm in their courtship: I thought well of my brother; I knew he was kind and good; his officers gave him the highest character for steadiness, activity, honour, and integrity; he loved *her*, and she loved *him*. I ought, perhaps, to have known, that he was not what is called a suitable match for Katharine; but girls of seventeen, especially upon such matters, do not always calculate. I am sure I did not, or I would not have helped her to take a step which was to make her parents so angry.

"It was the same blindness in my own case that permitted me to listen to your professions. I am not ashamed to own, John, that I loved you fondly; nor am I ashamed to tell you, although perhaps you will not believe me, that the impressions made *then* remain as strong as ever. I have not seen you here for more now than three years. Perhaps it is for the best. I *did* see you once, now about four months since, riding with another gentleman; it was in the Kent Road. I thought you saw *me*, but I am sure I must have been mistaken.

"What I now write about, cuts me to the soul! *My* fate is sealed! and never shall a murmur of mine for myself cause you a moment's uneasiness. The folly was mine: I alone will suffer!—But there is another to whom—I scarce can hold my pen to write the words—to whom, by the strongest ties of nature, and the sacred word of God, I am bound. I could not beg of a stranger; my heart would burst before I could confess my wretchedness;—to *you*, John, I *can* speak. My poor mother is, I fear, dying. She has been confined to her bed for several days, and I have nobody to watch over her but myself. Her illness has prevented her working, and my constant attendance upon her, has hindered me from doing anything myself. Do not be angry with me, John; what I ask, is not for myself. She shall bless you for your care of her, and be grateful for any little aid you may afford her. When she recovers, she and I will struggle to repay you.

"If you required any proof of my unshaken regard, you might find it in this request. As I have told you, time and reflection have taught me the folly of my ever considering you more than a friend,—it is in the character of a dear friend that I ask this favour for the best of parents.

"I have put the address to this letter, which is the same as the one which was to my last; but I thought, perhaps, you might have destroyed it and forgotten the direction. We have not heard from George for more than two years, which makes my poor mother

very sad; but we have been told that his regiment is coming home. You who are so much in the world could find out in a minute, I know: even if you did not care about George, you must be anxious to hear of Katharine, whom you fondly loved, and who I know loved you with equal affection.

"I will not take up more of your time. Let me have one line, to say you have received this. I shall count the minutes till I get your answer, which may at all events assure me that you are not angry with me. God bless you, John—dear John! and assure yourself of the affectionate friendship of

"Yours, ANNE BROWN.

"You will see by the seal of this, how your present to me was valued, and how it has been treasured. Adieu."

This was the letter which Mr. John Brag thrust into his coat pocket in his mother's presence, and which in five minutes afterwards was as hastily withdrawn from it and thrown into the fire unopened and unread. "John," as poor Anne called him, knew the writing, and with the low cunning of a vulgar mind, fancied he could justly anticipate the contents of an appeal from an amiable woman whom he had deluded and betrayed, leaving her no consolation in her desertion but that which she could not fail to derive from the support of religion and the consciousness of her own unspotted virtue.

Yes, Anne, the humble unpretending Anne, was still the gentle, modest creature he had found her. Her mind was, perhaps, not so very highly cultivated as others in the world, nor were her accomplishments so numerous, but she was a woman; and kindness, duty, devotion, and disinterestedness were blended in the composition of her character. Mr. John Brag would probably have described her in different terms, had he ever permitted himself to speak of her, and perhaps would have affected to pity the "poor creature," while he laughed at her fondness and credulity. Mr. John Brag was a great talker, and everybody knows what that is. The nature and extent of his feelings and regard for the once loved of his earlier days may easily be ascertained, by the way in which he treated her appeal. He stood and looked at the flames as they scorched and finally consumed the paper, and quitted the room perfectly satisfied with his firmness and philosophy, thinking, as it appeared, with Lord Montague's anonymous friend, that "the danger was past as soon as he had burned the letter."

The writing this letter to one whom she yet believed in heart devoted to her, although withheld from making her his wife by considerations first instilled into his mind by his late father, and, for all she knew, kept alive by his surviving parent, cost poor Anne a severe struggle. When it was despatched, it became the

sole object of her consideration from morning till night. The doubt whether she had done wrong,—whether John would think ill of her, or fancy her mercenary or presuming,—whether he would receive it as she hoped, and come perhaps himself, bearing the relief she sought for her poor mother,—whether he would make a point of taking it to her on the day upon which the application reached him, the day upon one anniversary of which he had given her the very seal with which she had sealed it,—whether it might awaken feelings which she was sure he possessed, but which, for the reasons we have just stated, had been suffered to lie dormant,—and whether —!

But vain were all her hopes—groundless all her fears,—by one rude blow the bond between them had been eternally severed; and while the poor anxious Anne was pondering these things in her mind, Mr. John Brag was dining at the Ship Tavern at Greenwich, with a party of uncommonly fine fellows, who, in spite of those leviathans of the deep, the steam-ships, which agitate the surface of the once silver Thames into a sort of metropolitan sea, had pulled down from Whitehall in their accustomed blue shirts, to partake of the fare for which, as well as its hospitals, Greenwich is so famous.

Day passed after day, and, as the reader may easily anticipate, Anne and her application remained unnoticed. In *her* mind this silence was associated with some calamity which must have befallen John, and this apprehension added to her other griefs and anxiety; meanwhile, her mother's illness increased, and, almost without the common necessities of life, Anne was at all hazards forced to call in medical assistance.

She had here again a difficult, a delicate task to perform, but it was a duty, a filial duty; and who can doubt that the well-regulated mind of this now humble girl was soon made up as to the course she was to pursue? The reader may have noticed the expression, "*now* humble," it is meant that he should notice it, because, humble as was and had been the position of the mother and her two children, they had been born to better things. Anne's father was the son of a Bristol merchant who had amassed considerable property, to which his son succeeded. He married early, and, contrary to the advice of his friends, left his native city to enter upon a new field of speculation in London.

Those who remember the wonderful prospects held out in the year 1825, and who perhaps are even yet suffering from the effects of their vast and sudden destruction, may anticipate the termination of Mr. Brown's career at an earlier period. Those who at the present moment are assailed on every side by the most plausible professions and the most tempting offers of fortunes incalculable, by an embarkation in the variously diverging abominations called

rail-roads, and who fancy a dividend is at hand before a spade has been struck in the ground, which it is proposed to disfigure and destroy for the lucre of gain, had better take warning by it. For some two or three years Mr. Brown occupied a handsome house, his table was open to his numerous mercantile friends, and, in those days, everything that Mr. Brown possessed was of the best, everything he did was of the wisest. The war which the triumph of Waterloo so gloriously closed, was, at the time of Mr. Brown's prosperity, raging fiercely; every foreign port was closed by an embargo; the market was safely shut against the importation of an article in general demand, of which he held a considerable quantity. The fine and liberal notion struck him of buying up at all hazards and all prices this desirable commodity:—he did so,—and, although as a young beginner in London not much known, he had agents all over the Empire, who were employed by him to keep incessantly purchasing, until warehouse after warehouse was stored with it, and he became nearly the only holder in the kingdom. Thus, having long before expended all his capital in the pursuit, he proposed to regulate the market with the turn of his finger. The price advanced, he still held; it advanced yet more; and he began to doubt whether he had screwed it up to a pitch sufficiently high to answer his purpose, and make him a *millionaire*; when, one fine morning, an order in council suddenly and unexpectedly opened the long-closed ports, and the next week beheld, Mr. Brown an irretrievably ruined bankrupt.

In the pursuit of his infatuating speculation his engagements had become incalculably enormous, and the consequent securities unbounded. The shock of such a reverse was too much for such a mind, and in the midst of recklessness, remorse, and despair, he consummated all his other madneses by suicide.

In the hour of distress, it was shown that no provision had been made for his widow and two children. His connexions at Bristol were few, and those, greatly offended at his quitting his native city, did not feel at all disposed to relieve his relict, whom, however unjustly, they thought proper, conveniently enough in order to save their own pence, to denounce as the first cause of his increased rate of living, to support which he had had recourse to extraordinary means of gain; and when all was done that *could* be done, an annuity of forty pounds a year was secured for her, by a subscription amongst a few of her husband's friends in London.

The fall was sudden, dreadful; at that period her son George was about eighteen, Anne about twelve. George had received a fair education at a school at Clapton or Hackney, I now forget which, and was a fine handsome grown young man. Anne was almost too young to appreciate the full extent of her misfortune, and her affectionate disposition led her thus early to devote all her

care to her surviving parent, to whom the change in their circumstances and station, to her almost unaccountable, only endeared her the more.

George was old enough to know the whole truth, and to feel the bitterness of repulse when his mother tried to procure him a mercantile situation in the city, and being of a bold and resolute character, he left his home without any communication with either his mother or sister, and enlisted in an infantry regiment, then in Ireland. It was not until his scheme had been irrevocably completed, that he imparted the truth to his parent, and then returning to receive her blessing, departed for the Emerald Isle with a sort of negative concurrence on her part, obtained by the expression of his determination upon the point, and an avowal that, if he even could obtain footing in any merchant's counting-house, he felt assured that his disposition and feelings would not permit him to continue in it.

George's removal from her care and charge, however much she lamented the separation, of course relieved the widow from considerable expense; and the little Anne was not yet of an age to require much outlay; for her mother, who had been cruelly misrepresented by her late husband's connexions as being the cause and origin of his follies, was of a most domestic turn of mind, and sufficiently accomplished to instruct her daughter in as much of ornamental education as it was probable she ever would require.

Still it was evident that the annuity which was secured to her would not be sufficient to support them without additions derivable from some other source; and thus it was that she formed the resolution of retiring to one of the villages near town, and turning the minor accomplishments which she possessed, to account, in order to increase her income. This she did, and, under the blessing of Providence, successfully. Undisturbed by the inquiries of any of the friends of her prosperity, but encouraged by the respectable inhabitants of the neighbourhood in which she had fixed her humble abode, she obtained by the sale of numerous fancy articles of her own making, and by even humbler employments, a sufficient income to render *her* happy, inasmuch as it secured the society of her beloved daughter. In Bristol and its neighbourhood the name of Brown, common as it is, might from circumstances have attracted the unpleasant curiosity of some, and entailed upon her the equally disagreeable commiseration or condemnation—coming hand in hand, perhaps—of others; but in the neighbourhood of London few people, out of his own immediate circle, knew the victim of ill-fated ambition, and all that was said of Mrs. Brown in the village in which she located herself was, that she was a remarkably nice, civil, lady-like person, and had evidently been born much above the station she then filled.

It was about two years after George's departure from the home he had scarcely inhabited, that the acquaintance between Katharine Brag and Nancy Brown commenced. It originated in the fact that Mrs. Brown, anxious that her child should improve herself upon certain points of education beyond those to which she might herself be competent to lead her, or rather, if the truth were told, finding that more regularity and restraint were necessary to settle the habits and fix the attention of her child, than were likely to be observed or enforced at home, resolved on sending her as a day scholar to Lavender Lodge, the "Seminary for young Ladies," at which Miss Brag was—in all probability as a set-off for soap and candles—being polished up to perfection—this special favour being granted to the widow on account of her exemplary conduct, and the universal respect in which she was held.

With the girls at Lavender Lodge, little Anne soon became an amazing favourite and a general pet. The very circumstance of her returning home to dinner, and quitting her companions after school-hours, gave her a sort of distinction, and made her, as it were, the medium of intelligence, and even of communication, by which contraband luxuries were sometimes smuggled in, and what are technically called "slip-letters," from the bigger girls to their friends, were smuggled out of the seminary. By these acts of kindness, the impropriety of which Nancy was then not old enough perfectly to comprehend, she was quite the fashion, and the boarders were unanimous in treating her with kindness and affection.

Amongst her greatest friends was Katharine Brag, who was more than ordinarily good-natured to her, and during the three years Miss Brag remained at school before she was pronounced everything that heart could wish, Anne had grown up to be more than sixteen years of age—and had so far gained the confidence of the head of the establishment, that it seemed more than probable she might eventually become a permanent assistant in its duties. Circumstances, however, occurred to put an end to this probability; for a lady who had taken considerable interest in Mrs. Brown's success, made a proposal to her to establish herself in the village of Walworth, near London, where she was certain she could ensure her support and patronage in the sale of her various works, as well as in the art and mystery of dress-making, which the industrious mother had studied, and now practised, to maintain herself and her child. This offer, superadded to the desire of Anne herself to contribute her share of labour to their joint maintenance, decided their removal.

This change of habitation tended rather to confirm the friendship of Miss Brag for her friend; for it was effected just about the period at which that young lady finally quitted school. The amiable manners of Anne again became her passport into the society of the

elder Bragg; and although she was received as the humble companion of the young lady, she was so genteel and so clever that they thought (much strengthened in their opinions by that of their daughter) that it was greatly to her advantage to have such a companion.

In the midst of this happy communion, and just as John Bragg had begun to look at Anne with eyes not quite indifferent, her brother George arrived at home on leave of absence from his regiment, previous to its departure for India. He was then a fine handsome young man, of two or three and twenty. The military drillings he had undergone had set him up, and his figure was just what a figure ought to be. The career he had run since he entered the army had been honourable and satisfactory. The notice of his officers had very early after his enlistment been attracted to the attention, regularity, and assiduity with which he performed all his military duties; and a rumour having soon got about that he was something better than he seemed to be, he was taken notice of by the captain of his company, who, after inquiries, not further pushed than he felt consistent with delicacy, and the evident desire of the young man himself for a certain degree of concealment, suggested him as a fit occupant of the office of paymaster's clerk, for which it was evident he was fully qualified:—he was speedily raised to be a corporal, and before his first four years of service were expired, had become serjeant-major of his regiment, a circumstance perhaps unparalleled in the British service.

In one of those moments which decide the fate of empires and of ladies, Katharine Bragg met George Brown; it took but one glance of his bright eyes to scorch her susceptible heart, and unfortunately or fortunately, as the case may be, George Brown reciprocated the feeling. It was no difficult matter to get Anne to agree to Katharine's avowal, that she had never seen so charming a person,—an officer too,—the thing of all others; for the immediate rank of the young hero “in mufti” was never explicitly defined; and while she was contriving all sorts of devices to enjoy his society in the participation of the various amusements of middling life, her brother John, who had become great friends with George for the sake of his sister, fell into all their arrangements with the greatest readiness; so that every day in which they could manage it, little parties were made for Exhibitions, Panoramas, and all the Vaux-halls, Lyceums, Playhouses, and places of public resort, where either during the performance or after it was over, they might so satisfactorily pair off, as to leave themselves counterchanged in couples, to the unqualified delights of that sort of honeyed conversation, to which it is as impossible to do justice in the repetition, as it is barbarous to interrupt in its progress.

After the play, as George was with her, Anne would stop to

supper with the old Brags; and then, as John Brag was fond of exercise, he would see George and his sister home to Walworth after supper was over; and so they went on, until John was desperately in love with Anne, and Katharine resolved upon marrying George.

Katharine believed that she had great influence over her father, and, from what Anne had told her of her origin, never imagined but that she should procure his consent to her marriage with George,—an affair which “pressed,” inasmuch as his leave would be out in about three weeks, and away he must march with his regiment. So Katharine, one fine afternoon, just gently touched upon the subject of Mr. Brown’s good qualities, in a *tête-à-tête* with her papa, and led the conversation into a channel which she thought very likely to extort an opinion from the old gentleman. She was right;—she succeeded in her speculation, and heard, to her infinite horror and amazement, that he would see a daughter of his dead at his feet before she should marry what he called a “Soger.”

And then forthwith “flared up” the anger of the venerable Brag, who, though a really plain straightforward man, and as free from pride or affectation as any wax and tallow chandler within the bills of mortality, became absolutely furious at the notion of this dressmaker and her brother,—people admitted only just to please his daughter’s fancy,—presuming and daring, and all *that*: which fury ended in a positive prohibition of any further intercourse between the parties; a mandate for which was accordingly issued, sanctioned of course by Mrs. Brag, who, however, in yielding her accordance to the decree, could not help thinking that Anne and her brother were as nice a couple of people as ever she had seen in all her born days.

It was at this juncture that the friendship of Anne for Katharine Brag and her affection for George were called into action. It was then she contrived meetings for them, to which Kate came escorted by John, and George accompanied by herself. Up to this period these had been matters of course; but when old Brag shut his doors against the Browns, and handed his daughter over to the care and surveillance of her brother John, it became another sort of affair, and as John was too happy to bask in Nancy’s smiles, he gladly squired his love-sick sister to their appointments; and thus matters went on for a fortnight or so when Kitty Brag ran away with the young Sergeant, who having, as well as his bride, attained the years of discretion, procured a licence and became man and wife,—a fact which came to the knowledge of the respectable parents of the bride by her non-appearance at breakfast, and a return of “*non est inventa*” made to a sort of warrant sent after her into her bed-room, whence she had decamped very early indeed in the morning.

From that morning neither Brag the elder nor Mrs. Brag had ever seen their child up to the period of the commencement of my narrative; Mr. Brag, as we know, had been gathered to his fathers; and George and his wife were still in India.

After the wedding and flight, the proscribed Anne used to see John, who contrived, unknown to the old people, to visit her and her mother as usual. This acquaintance was for some time continued as the reader may have already discovered; its happy termination being only delayed, as Brag had himself said, until the death of his father should leave him free to act for himself. Meanwhile the said father having then but one object left upon which to lavish all his paternal affection, gave his son counsel and promises which led him to aspire, and, as he said, "look up," and so Johnny by degrees became less ardent and infinitely more civil towards Miss Brown, until by those gentle gradations of coolness which fond and anxious hearts can only justly estimate, she saw him seldom, and heard from him rarely. His father's death occurred,—Brag immediately took a higher flight, and having furnished himself up by dint of private lessons and evening tuition, was ready, when he came into possession of the business, to abandon the course which his blinded parent had pursued, to enable him to cut a figure, and became the thing which the reader has already seen him to be.

The intelligence which Mrs. Brown had from time to time received of George was extremely satisfactory; he had been specially noticed by Major Mopes, (the military secretary of Sir Cadwallader Adamthwaite, the commander-in-chief at the presidency,) who had, upon the recommendation of the paymaster of the regiment, whose clerk he had been, appointed him to a similar situation in his office; a step which George, who was full of ambition, wrote home to say he hoped might lead to better things.

What they might be, Mrs. Brown of Walworth did not exactly understand; however, he appeared happy, spoke affectionately of his wife, and looked forward to the next ten or fifteen years as likely to bring him home again. To Anne, a prospective view of ten or fifteen years was but a sad one; the loss of Katharine had been to her severe and trying, and every month, and every year grew sadder, until at last the only consolation left which she derived from George's letters, was lost, and at the time she wrote the appeal to John, with which the chapter begins, she had not, as she says, heard from him for more than two years.

Then it was that real sorrow and bitterness of heart came over her,—her mother's illness, her brother's silence, her lover's falsehood, her own destitution,—it was a dreadful combination of evils, against which she had to bear up. One other blow was only wanting to overwhelm her,—and it fell.

There *are* moments when the most serious calamities affect us less than matters which to the million may appear of no moment or importance whatever ; a look, a frown, a smile, nothing in themselves, have, when the mind is wrought up to a certain pitch of excitement, a power more dreadful than the gravest evils of another day.

I have already said that, after waiting for an answer to the letter she wrote to "John,"—on her birth-day,—sealed with his seal,—and moistened with her tears—(the letter he destroyed unread),—she felt the absolute necessity of overcoming all scruples, and conquering all repugnance to what might be considered the solicitation of charity in favour of her mother; and accordingly she set forth from their humble dwelling, leaving her sinking parent in the care of a temporary nurse, to call upon a well-known professional man in the neighbourhood of Burlington Gardens, of whom she had often heard the lady who first induced them to take up their abode in Walworth (but who now was herself dead)—speak in the highest terms. Anne had indeed seen him at that lady's house, and felt that that circumstance gave her something like confidence to make an appeal to him on behalf of her sick mother, which she would not have felt with regard to a perfect stranger.

Behold then this fair, fond, and affectionate daughter on her way—trembling and doubting, as she hurried along the crowded streets,—her eyes cast down or heedlessly wandering, while her thoughts are all concentrated on the pillow on which her dying mother's aching head was laid; a prayer to Heaven resting on her lips, and hope, strengthened and sanctified by the silent appeal, glowing in her heart. Just as she reaches the neighbourhood of the worthy man who is to minister worldly relief to her parent's afflictions, her way is intercepted,—there is a crowd—a stoppage,—she is rudely pressed upon,—stared at, by an unmeaning insolent countenance belonging to a tall, tiger-looking, smoke-dried dandy, upon whose arm is leaning a short, smart, vulgar-genteel companion. The tall fellow continues his gaze for a moment; the short fellow, emulating this impertinence, and anxious to behold the beauty who has attracted his friend's attention, proceeds to the manual experiment of pinching her arm. The suffering wanderer turns indignantly to repel the insult, and sees before her, grinning and grimacing, like a baboon, that paragon of pretension, Mr. John Brag.

At such a moment such a sight was, indeed, a trial;—but if it struck daggers into her heart thus to be treated by *him*, who once, and in other days, had vowed his vow of love and faith to her, what must she have felt, when, upon beholding her pallid agitated countenance, she saw the fellow wink at his companion, and heard him exclaim with the peculiar elegance of the school to which he

aspired to belong, "Ho, ho,—come along, my lord— no go—this is a mistake,"—and clutching his tall friend's arm, hurry on, shrugging up his shoulders in a sort of mock despair, and no doubt giving his own version of the nature of the previous acquaintance which had evidently subsisted between himself and the supposed stranger!

Anne stood still for a moment—had she tried to move forward, she would have fallen;—her breath faltered—the blood seemed to ebb and flow in her heart—her eyes swam with tears;—she was better,—she continued her way, and reached the physician's door,—it was opened to her, and she was shown into a parlour where those who came under similar circumstances were accustomed to wait:—there it was that her feelings had way,—she scarcely had entered before floods of tears poured down her pale cheeks, and they who had come for advice and assistance themselves, were eager and active in her service. As soon as intelligence of the circumstance had been conveyed to the master of the house, he made his appearance in the apartment, and seeing the extent of poor Anne's agitation, caused her to be removed into another room, where every attention was paid her which the exigency of her case required.

Her agitation, however, appeared to increase, and the moment she was sufficiently recovered to attempt to explain herself, she relapsed into a state so painful and alarming, that the excellent man, satisfied by the circumstances that she was labouring under some excitement, any attempt to soothe which, upon the instant would be perfectly vain and useless, placed her in the care of his house-keeper, (for whom he despatched a servant,) with directions to keep the young lady perfectly quiet, and endeavour to soothe and calm her mind until he should return, after having seen those patients who where in the habit, at stated hours, of calling upon him at his own house.

And while all this was going on, Mr. John Brag and his friend Lord Tom Towzle, who, as the reader perhaps has anticipated, was his companion upon the occasion, and whom although he "Tom-mied" him and "Towzled" him in his absence, he "my lorded" in his presence to an immeasurable extent of vulgarity, not merely to toady the stripling but to be overheard by the passing crowd—were, as I suspected, engaged in an elaborate detail of Jack's foregone adventures with Anne, which, as Lord Tom did not care whether Brag were hanged or not, so as he rode his horse "Slap-bang" to win on the following Thursday, he might just as well have saved himself the trouble of repeating.

Upon what small things great things turn, say ten thousand writers,—so is it proved by this adventure of Mr. Brag's. Worlds would not have convinced Anne Brown of his falsehood and heart-

lessness, had this event not occurred; they were now proclaimed—established,—practically established. His first assault might have been mere rudeness,—not likely to endear him to one who fancied him devoted to her; but when the discovery *had been* made, and he saw whom he had outraged, to conduct himself as he had done, was enough to decide the question. Thus it is that we learn more in an hour from a lecture illustrated by experiments, than we can collect from written treatises or printed instructions in a year. The art, or science, whatever it may be, is embodied,—you have it before you,—and the very facility with which the professor performs his operations, makes the spectator himself a proficient.

So was it with Anne:—she had seen what no book could have taught her, she had witnessed *that* which no other evidence would have induced her to believe. The blow was severe, but perhaps it was providential.

CHAPTER V.

HAVING safely housed our unhappy girl in the house of the worthy physician, we may perhaps be permitted to cast our eyes towards the gay widow and her sensitive sister, who, truth to be told, were suffering as much in *their* way as our more humble friend from Walworth.

Mrs. Dallington, whose perception was remarkably clear, and whose judgment was particularly sound, had for some time been fully aware of the state of Sir Charles Lydiard's heart and mind—for his mind and his heart were waging a perpetual war with each other; nor, however solicitous she might be (I admit that supposition merely for argument's sake) to bring their acquaintance to a happy termination, did she entirely regret the caution and consideration with which, it was so evident, the fastidious baronet bent his steps towards the hymeneal altar. She felt assured that, if he judged her rightly and fairly, she should eventually possess his entire affection; and she also felt, that to obtain it after such a scrutiny would be to secure it for the rest of her life.

It must be allowed that she sometimes thought he had considered and examined and scrutinized quite long enough, and believed that the time had arrived when she should have an opportunity of saying yea or nay, as the case might be; but, whenever the crisis seemed at hand, some new doubt, some new apprehension, appeared to be conjured up, the bright vision was dissipated, and she remained still the expecting, disappointed Mrs. Dallington.

Blanche, on the other hand, received a proposal from Rushton almost every day in the week—if at least the most violent pro-

testations of love and devotion might be so construed; but the *brusquerie* of his character evinced itself so perpetually, that the chances were, that the evening of the brightest day ended in a storm. Blanche was quite aware of the disposition she had to deal with; and although flurried and fluttered by her lover's extraordinary animation and vivacity, she resolved not to surrender her hand, whatever might be the fate of her heart, until she was convinced that her hero was calmed into a fit state for domestication. In point of fact, Rushton was quite as jealous of Blanche as Lydiard was of her sister; but his jealousy was of a different caste: he smiled, frowned, laughed, scolded, and did ten thousand unaccountable things, just as he was acted upon by passing events, while Lydiard never suffered himself to be betrayed into any external evidence of what occupied his mind: and thus the pair of lovers continued to make themselves as uncomfortable as they made those, whom upon all essential points were devotedly their own.

Affairs were in this delicate position when Brag, who was encouraged in all his absurdities by his noble friend Lord Tom, partly to gratify his vanity, and so secure his aid, if required, upon emergencies, and partly to afford sport to his lordship's friends, opened his heart in a kind of hypothetical way to the young lord with regard to the widow and her sister, to which train of thought he had been led by the conversation he had previously had with Rushton in the street.

"I don't see," said Jack, "why—I—shouldn't do as well as my neighbours, in the matrimonial line. I look on, at others who play at courting with wonder; they seem to me to make no move. Now there's Sir Charles Lydiard and the widow—they don't care a fig for each other, and yet they are to be married, as the world says. As for Blanche, she seems to me to care as little for Rushton. Why, hang it! if I wanted to marry either of them, it would not be a week's work. No, no!—faint heart—eh! you know. I'd just make either of them buckle to, in half the time, and no mistake."

"Have you ever thought of such a thing, Jack?" said Lord Tom, who, piqued by the coldness with which the widow had always received him, felt by no means ill-disposed to encourage his tiger in any scheme likely to make a commotion in the family.

"Why," said Jack, "I can't say that I have; but I—of course, I dare say it means no more than what I always meet with—but I have thought that there was something uncommon odd about the widow's eyes."

"Indeed!" said Lord Tom,—“and very handsome eyes they are too: besides, Jack, she is rich, and what they call in the city ‘well to do.’”

"Mum!" said Jack—"know her fortune to a fraction: didn't overlook that in the calculation."

"Oh!" said his lordship—"then you *have* been thinking rather seriously upon the subject."

"Not seriously," replied the tiger, "only I was considering that Sir Charles is what I call losing time—waiting upon her too long, as we should say at Epsom. It would be a good match,—not that I care for money—no more than my father did. Did I ever tell you of my governor and his hundred-pound-note?"

"Not that I recollect," said his lordship, although he did.

"Why, *my* father," said Jack, "was one day walking along the Strand, when, just as he came by the end of Buckingham Street, a fellow picked his pocket of his pocket-book, full of memoranda^s, letters, and other papers, 'of no use but to the owner.' and a hundred pound note besides. What d'ye think he did, as soon as he found out his loss?"

"Went to Bow Street, perhaps," said Lord Tom.

"No."

"Stepped to the Bank and stopped it."

"Couldn't—didn't know the number."

"Caught the thief, then."

"No," said Jack, "not a bit of it. The minute he found he had lost it, he went home and got another."

"In order to have it stolen like the former," said Lord Tom.

"Not a bit of it," replied Jack; "just to show how little he cared about money. So with *me*; I don't care for money, except as it buys money's worth. What's a guinea in a box?—not better than a brass button in a bag. But still one cannot marry without the stumpy."

"Then try the widow," said Lord Tom; "you have my full permission—only don't quote me as authority. You will drive Sir Charles either into a proposal or the Serpentine river; so at all events something will come of it."

"But, my lord," said Jack, "since we *have* touched upon this matter, I will be candid. I have just said I don't value money; but, if it weren't for the fortune, I would rather marry the sister."

"And has *she* been kind too," said Lord Tom.

"Why," said Jack, simpering, and affecting to look modest, "I can't say kind—uncommon goodnatured—and—laughs—and all that; and I have heard a long-headed old fellow, who knows the sex, say, that if you can once make a grave female laugh, the day is your own."

"Provided always," said his lordship, "that she laughs *with* and not *at* you; the difference is surprisingly great."

"Oh! Blanche is no ways whatsoever satirical," said the tallow-

chandler :—"and, hang me ! if I was asked, I should say there wasn't a pin to choose between them."

"Take my advice, Jack," said the mischievous lordling—"try them both. Manage your matters well—lead them both on—there is no chance of their confiding in each other, because as they are both supposed to be engaged, neither would choose to trust the other with any proof of her infidelity."

"Shall I write to the widow," said Jack, "and talk to the sister"—

"Write, man ! are you mad?" said Lord Tom. "Never write—that *would* be a pretty affair. Who knows how notes may mis-carry—how writing-desks may be left open, or if not, be broken open ? Besides, they might, upon so strange a proceeding as that, compare notes, and what a pretty mess you would be in then ! No ; send them—try them—get them apart, and ascertain the extent of their interest in you."

Brag listened to all this advice of his noble friend, believing it to be given *de bonne foi* ; and although there appeared difficulties in the delicate process which his lordship suggested, and which, by a mind like Brag's, were not perfectly easy to be surmounted, he thought he comprehended the general tenor of his instructions, which had for its object his making himself uncommonly agreeable to both parties.

"Lead Blanche on," said Lord Tom, "by a course of negative officiousness ; be always near her, devoted and unaffected. Let her fall into friendship ; sympathize with her in all her feelings, agree in all her opinions—but never seem to do so with any defined object : thus in a fortnight or three weeks you will obtain her confidence. She will be convinced you esteem her and value her, and are anxious for her comfort and happiness ; then she'll grow kind and familiar, and, thrown off her guard by your respectful behaviour, will begin to evince an undisguised wish for your society. She will at last feel that you are somehow, she can scarcely tell how, essential to her happiness, and when you have got her into this blessed state of amiability, off with your disguise of friendship, like the hero of a tragedy, and profess yourself her lover. Then"—

"Ay, ay," interrupted Jack, "that's all very well, my dear lord, and a very pretty month's amusement it would be, to do all you prescribe : but, then, what will Frank Rushton be about to let me ? He's as fiery as a dragon, and as jealous as old Nick. No, no, whatever is done, must be done clean, off-hand, smack smooth, and no mistake."

"Then," said Lord Tom, "if that's your principle, you had better take a shot at the widow ; she's not so likely to be flurried by a hurry ; and, besides, your activity will form such a striking

contrast to the respectable icicle now hanging about her, that you will in all probability carry the day by a *coup de main*."

"Just after my own heart," said Jack; "by Job! I'll have a shy at her."

"Do," said his lordship, "and when you are installed in the town-house and family mansion in the west or north, or wherever it is, make yourself agreeable; fill your house with your friends, and let us be jolly."

"We'll live like fighting cocks," said Jack; "you only just see. I'll do it regular; there sha'n't be a fellow in the king's dominions who shall beat me."

"Success attend you, Jack!" said his lordship, "but don't forget Thursday."

"I'll be punctual to the minute," said Jack; "my watch is a regular-built chronometer. You shall find me at the starting-post, all right, and no mistake."

And so the friends parted, Brag having not the slightest intention of ever risking a second visit to Wigglesford, or a second attempt to trespass on the surly farmer's grounds, who had threatened him for his former proceeding; and moreover being resolved to devote the next few days to the achievement of one of the beauties, of both of whom he was convinced, in his small mind, he was a regularly established favourite.

Meanwhile we must not forget poor Anne Brown, whom we left under the care of the physician's housekeeper, and who, when she recovered from the agitation which kept her senseless for some hours, found herself with her head reclining upon the arm of that highly respectable functionary.

It would require a much greater space than I am permitted in this hasty narrative, to describe the excellent qualities of Dr. Mead, the eminent and able practitioner to whom the anxious daughter had prevailed upon herself to apply for advice and assistance; but it is absolutely necessary that the reader should be made acquainted, to a certain extent, with the attributes of his character, even beyond the pale of his profession, the exercise of which seemed rather the fruit of a desire to do good to others, than of any venal feeling of self-aggrandizement.

Although there exists no documentary evidence to prove his descent from the eminent physician of the same name, it seems not entirely improbable that the fortuitous circumstance of a similarity of patronymic and profession might have conduced almost unconsciously to a similarity of feeling and disposition between them. Matthew Mead, the father of the famous doctor, was a nonconforming divine: our Dr. Mead's father was an orthodox clergyman. If the famous Mead married early, our Mead was yet single; and whatever turn he might have had for the fine arts, or whatever

eneration he entertained for their professors, his means, although fully adequate to the maintenance of a highly respectable establishment and equipage, were not yet sufficiently extensive to emulate his namesake as a patron or protector. Still, his income might have been much larger; had he not upon every occasion where, by a benevolent curiosity, he discovered the slenderness of a patient's means, forborne to accept the fees which from the rich and great he did not hesitate to accept, and which his spreading fame and rising reputation produced in very considerable numbers.

In his manners mild and soothing, in his conversation unaffected and intelligent, his study appeared to be to "minister to the mind diseased," as well as to the body; and his approach to the sick chamber was hailed by the watchful invalid rather as a relief from pain and suffering in itself, than as the mere business visit of a professional man, coming in the ordinary routine of duty to enquire and prescribe.

With feelings and a disposition like this, the benevolence of his heart beaming in his countenance, and the sympathy which he felt for sorrow and sadness expressed in language the most gentle, and in a tone the most harmonious, it is not surprising that Dr. Mead should have speedily reassured poor Anne, to whom, as soon as she was sufficiently recovered to be conscious of her situation, he was summoned by the housekeeper, and whom he was greatly surprised, upon inquiry, to find not a patient, but merely the emissary from one who sought his advice.

It was in a moment evident to his searching eye, that the agitation under which she had been suffering, and from which she was not yet quite recovered, must have had its origin in some more sudden event, and one of more recent occurrence than the illness of her mother: he resolved to question her upon the point; but a recurrence of all the worst symptoms induced him to forego any further search into a matter, in fact, disconnected with the object of her visit to his house.

That object was immediately attained. The excellent man ordered his carriage to be got ready instantly, and directed the housekeeper, who had been in attendance on Anne, to accompany her to her mother's house, and to return home with the carriage, telling her that he would himself, having called upon one or two patients in his immediate neighbourhood on foot, proceed to visit his new patient at a later hour; giving as a reason for this proceeding the absolute necessity of his seeing those persons before his departure for Walworth, and the probable anxiety of Mrs. Brown for the safety of her daughter, if she should delay her return until he should be able to accompany her.

To some practitioners, this delicacy on the part of our doctor might appear somewhat too refined, the obvious mode of proceed-

ing being, to have handed the young lady into the carriage, and driven with her to her mother's residence; but Mead felt otherwise. He had odd notions upon many points; and beyond what he considered the main object of this arrangement, the fact, that an entirely unexpected visit from a stranger might not altogether stilt the convenience of an establishment so confined as that of Mrs. Brown's, did not ship his regard or consideration.

When Anne reached home, she had a hard part to play. The anxiety she felt for her mother; the pang she received when she saw the sunken eye of her beloved parent fixed—not tearless—on her returned child, filled with a half-sanguine, half-hopeless expression, and heard her breathing heavily, made her heart ache to its very centre. Filled with gratitude to their expected benefactor, she endeavored to explain to her suffering mother the extent of his kindness and consideration, while the recollection of the callous barbarity of the man she had once loved, and whom she believed to have loved her, wrung her to the very soul.

That she was indignant at the treatment she had experienced, who shall doubt?—but who, that knows woman, will doubt either that in the heart where Love has once dwelt, the very memory of his presence there, will extenuate the fault which should make the object hateful.

This generous, gentle feeling turned all the force of the indignation which ought to have been directed against the paltry pretender himself, towards his associates, to whose baleful influence Anne entirely attributed the astounding change which had taken place in his manners. Even the neglect of her letter was laid to the same account; but yet what made the wound he had inflicted rankle the more, was the impossibility at the present juncture of risking her mother's tranquillity—perhaps existence, by telling her what had occurred, or of accounting for her lengthened absence by explaining the cause of the indisposition to which it was attributable.

In less than two hours after Anne's return the doctor, true to his promise, arrived. It is scarcely possible to describe her feelings as he entered the room where her mother lay; it seemed as if Hope had revived in her breast—that there was somebody who felt an interest for them. She drew back from the bed-side, and hid her face in her hands to conceal her emotion: she cried like a child, and tears again were a relief to her aching heart.

The kind doctor's questions to Mrs. Brown were few: the case needed little enquiry—it was a sinking of nature, caused, as it seemed to him, less by bodily ills than mental affliction, and considerably accelerated by the want of proper air, and, he almost feared, nourishment. He wrote a prescription, rather however as a matter of form, satisfactory to the patient, than with any view of the success of medicine, and then, having taken leave of his

patient, beckoned Anne to follow him from the apartment.

"Your mother must be removed as soon as she can bear the fatigue," said the doctor. "Change of air and diet are absolutely necessary."

Anne heard the fiat in silence, and again tears rolled down her cheeks.

"I should think," continued Dr. Mead, "that with care and a proper regimen the removal might be effected in four or five days."

Still Anne remained silent and trembling, her eyes cast down upon the ground.

"You should contrive to amuse her mind," said the doctor; "she should not refuse to see her friends."

"God help us!" sobbed Anne, unable longer to conceal her agitation,—"*we* have no friends! What is to be done, Heaven knows! She must be moved; your kind directions shall be obeyed, sir;—I"—

"My dear young lady," said Mead, "*you* wrong yourself, and *me*, when you say you have no friends. In *me* you have a friend. Rely on Providence, and never despair:—friends will always be raised up for confiding piety, for suffering virtue, and for filial duty in distress. I will not indelicately press my enquiries, but you must permit me to act upon my own advice. I am the friend your mother must admit. I will call here to-morrow; and I think, without putting either of you to much inconvenience, I can secure you a comfortable residence in a worthy and respectable family, in a desirable climate. I must manage all this; and perhaps I may be able, at no distant period, to give you and your mother a good reason why she need not feel herself under any serious obligation to me:—upon this point I will not trouble you to-day,—you have had worry and agitation enough. Keep yourself calm and quiet; cheer your mother's hopes—there is no fear of a dangerous result; upon that point I will stake my reputation. Let her have the medicine I have written for, and to-morrow, by one, I shall see you again."

Saying which, he shook hands with the grateful Anne, and proceeded to his carriage.

At no period of our lives does kindness so powerfully affect us as when it comes immediately after we have received some cruel blow. The affectionate tone and spirit of the doctor's consolatory address struck to Anne's heart, and she returned to her mother, blessing God who had raised up such a help to them in the hour of gloom and adversity.

The doctor's benevolence did not stop here, even for the day. In the evening, whilst Anne was preparing the best refreshment she could contrive to procure with but slender means of purchase and small skill in cookery, the housekeeper of the excellent doctor

arrived, bringing with her, sundry little delicacies, and some wine which her master, "had taken the liberty of sending, because by experience he knew its soundness and excellence of quality, and was therefore sure it would be serviceable to his patient in her particular case;" in short, every comfort was secured to her that sympathy could suggest or art provide; and, as Anne herself said, the very feelings which such attentions inspired, contributed of themselves materially to exhilarate and revive her poor mother, whose bodily ailments, as Mead had surmised, were painfully aggravated by mental depression.

And yet, grateful to Providence as Anne was, with a heart overflowing with thankfulness to the generous, noble-minded man who in a few hours had converted a house of mourning into a house of hope, if not of happiness,—when she laid her head upon the pillow near her mother, who slept tranquilly, her first thoughts were of that unworthy being by whom she had been first insulted and then repudiated even as a common acquaintance, in the street that morning.

It seemed like a dream to her even then. Prepared as she must have been, and indeed had told him she was, eternally to resign any claim of a tender nature upon his heart, she could not bear the thought of being spurned by the man for whom she had permitted herself not only to feel, but admit that she felt an affection. That she had not deserved such usage was self-evident, and that she should receive it particularly after her last appeal, was galling and distracting beyond endurance. Little did she think how perfectly disconnected with that appeal his conduct was, or suspect how he had treated her last letter.

These thoughts, and those of early days, were naturally blended in her mind with the memory of her brother George, whose long silence was another source of anxiety and agitation; nor could she forget, besides the tenderer ties to John, the closeness of their connexion by George's marriage. If George had been at home, thought Anne, he would not have behaved so—but George too has forgotten us. All those who once were dear to us, and we to them, are gone! and we are helped and comforted by the stranger upon whom we have no claim, and who has no tie to us but his own benevolence.

In the morning, Mrs. Brown awoke after a refreshing sleep, very much better than even her watchful daughter could have hoped. It was but too evident that the physician had rightly decided on the character of her complaint, and the absolute necessity of a change of regimen in the first instance, to be followed up by a removal from the close atmosphere of a small room in a gas-lighted suburban village to a purer air. Indeed, so very much better did her mother appear, that Anne repeated to her the ver-

bal prescription of the doctor, adding the proposal he had made of providing them with a comfortable residence in a family known to himself.

For three days did Dr. Mead continue his visits punctually, bringing with him upon each occasion some little luxury prepared for use, under the plea that he was most anxious his patient's food should be dressed according to rule, and that he could not be satisfied unless his own servants were the operators under his own immediate direction. At the expiration of a week he pronounced her capable of bearing the fatigue of removal; and on the following Saturday evening Mrs. Brown and her daughter found themselves established in a delightful cottage surrounded by gardens and fields, within four miles of town, the master and mistress of which appeared the devoted servants of the worthy doctor, and vied with each other in showing attention and courtesy to their new inmates.

With returning health, there arose in Mrs. Brown's mind an irresistible feeling of embarrassment connected with her present situation. She found herself and her daughter placed in a position of ease and comfort, with the consciousness hanging over her that she was incapable of affording the luxuries which she was enjoying, and a sensitive unwillingness either to trespass upon the kindness of their benefactor, or if that kindness were merely limited to the recommendation of their new residence, equally anxious not to involve herself in expenses which she was aware that she could not defray.

The doctor's hours of visiting his patient were different from those which he had fixed before their removal. He came in the evenings, partook of their tea, and sat longer and stayed later each evening that he came—and so a week wore away—and yet Mrs. Brown had not the courage to put those questions which she had resolved somehow to ask, and to which her medical friend's conduct certainly did not appear likely to afford any practical solution; for when he congratulated her upon the improvement of her health, he alluded to a trial of some new medicine, about the effects of which upon her constitution he was very sanguine, and which he should begin with, in “a week or two.”

The words had scarce passed his lips, when the eyes of mother and daughter met, not unseen by the doctor, who immediately added to what he had already said:—“Perhaps you may be of opinion that in that time you will have no need of any medicine at all.”

This seemed to be an occasion which Mrs. Brown might seize, of coming to an explanation of her feelings, and she availed herself of it accordingly; and difficult as was the task to perform, she contrived to make the doctor understand the delicacy of her position, and the apprehensions under which she laboured.

"My dear madam," said Mead, "I am delighted that you have given me an opportunity of speaking upon this matter. As the worthy people of this house can tell you, or may perhaps have told you, you are not the first patient I have recommended to their care; and that when such an event happens, I consider them my guests during their residence here. In *your* case, however, there are circumstances very different from those which occur in many others, as far as I am concerned:—you have, naturally enough, forgotten *me*; but we have met before the occasion upon which I recently visited you."

"Indeed!" said the lady, somewhat incredulously.

"Indeed," replied the physician, "I have dined in your house, madam, more than once. I was not aware of this fact when first I called on you, but circumstances and coincidences led me to institute an enquiry, and I found in *you*, madam, the widow of the man to whom I may, without exaggeration, attribute my success in life, and the place I now hold in society and my profession."

"You surprise me exceedingly," said Mrs. Brown.

"It is now more than four-and-twenty years since," said Dr. Mead, "that I was recommended to the notice of Mr. Brown by a friend of his and a connexion of mine, then living at Bristol; and upon my arrival in London I was, in consequence of that introduction, invited to your house, where, as I have already said, I dined more than once. But it was not by mere commonplace hospitality that Mr. Brown proved the warmth and sincerity of his feelings towards me. Upon one occasion, when an opportunity presented itself—in all human probability the deciding opportunity of my life—for furthering my professional views, a sum of money was necessary to the accomplishment of my wishes, of which I was not possessed. Had not Mr. Brown at that time generously assisted me, I must have relinquished the object I had in view, the realization of which, proved, as I have already said, the foundation of my fortunes. I have now, I think, said sufficient to overcome all your scruples with regard to my present conduct; and I only rejoice that the opportunity is afforded me of proving to you and this dear young lady, that there is still in the world such a sentiment as Gratitude."

"This is most extraordinary!" said Anne.

- "For several years," continued Dr. Mead, "after my return from the Continent, I endeavoured to find out the widow of my benefactor, but without success, and I look upon that as one of the most fortunate hours of my life in which the suffering daughter of my first friend came to require my assistance, attracted to me by a reputation which her father had so materially contributed to establish. Now," added he, "you may look on me with feelings far different from those which have hitherto occupied your hearts and

minds :—in me you see only the *protégé* endeavouring as much as in his power lies, to evince his thankfulness where it is so justly due."

"What are we to say to you?" said the agitated parent.

"Nothing, nothing," interrupted Mead, "Permit me to continue my visits, now, luckily not rendered professionally necessary. Let me entreat you to remain where you are, and allow me, whenever I can, to come hither and enjoy in your society, and that of your exemplary daughter, a repose after the hurries and worries of a London life, which I have long but vainly sought."

Nobody can doubt what, under the circumstances, was the course Mrs. Brown pursued, although, it must be confessed, that she even then, had her doubts as to the truth of the doctor's narrative; regarding the statement of his obligations to her husband, and his consequent success in life, rather as the fruits of an inventive faculty, exerted in order to overcome her scruples and satisfy her delicacy, than as a matter-of-fact bit of history.

Of herself, she had not the slightest recollection of the name of her new old friend in the catalogue of visitors at her house; nor could she recall to her mind the personal appearance of any guest at her husband's hospitable board which bore a resemblance to the doctor. A quarter of a century had elapsed, and the tallow-faced pupil of the hospitals had grown into the mellow-tinted arbiter of the mortal destinies of men; and if the doctor had been sufficiently ungallant (which doctors never are) to have made an ample confession on *his* part, it is quite certain he must have said, that he found not in the sinking widow whom he had restored, any remains of the charms and attractions which had in his early days characterized the gay and dashing wife.

Poor Brown however had, in the zenith of his career, been as hospitable as a Madeira merchant, and was wont to welcome to his table men of all trades and nations, all callings and professions. He held it to be part of his business to cement connexions by social intercourse, and therefore while he kept in fact, open house, it was morally impossible for his lady, who was not much interested in the casual guests "below the salt," to recollect all their names or persons. Still she could hardly divest herself of the idea that the doctor's history was a soothing fiction; although her daughter, whose opinion of the said doctor was somehow more favourable than that of her parent, declared her conviction that he was much too honourable, too candid, and too sincere, to endeavour to carry even a favourite point by deception or misrepresentation.

How this paragon of physicians turned out in the wearing, we may perhaps live to see.

CHAPTER VI.

It was a short time after this, that Mr. Brag was called upon to perform a feat for the amusement of his aristocratic friends, which, however powerful the effect it actually did produce, terminated in a manner less agreeable to the actor than the audience.

Upon our hero's arrival one day at the lodgings of Lord Tom Towzle, he found his lordship and two other worthies concocting an answer to a matrimonial advertisement which had appeared in the columns of that most fashionable of all journals, *The Morning Post*; and Jack's appearance to take his seat in such a council was hailed with enthusiasm;—in fact, he was the very man to undertake the conduct of the whole affair.

The advertisement ran thus:—

“ MATRIMONY.—A widow lady, in good circumstances and of high respectability, being, from causes which she will be most happy to explain, left much alone, is desirous of again entering the married state, provided she could find a gentleman of honour and character who might feel a similar wish. The advertiser is aware that an address of this nature is unusual, and may therefore create a prejudice against her in the minds of some; she is, however, confident, that upon investigation her conduct will be shown to be perfectly justifiable. Letters, post-paid, directed to A. Z. to be left at the Twopenny Post-office the corner of Little Queen Street, Holborn, will be attended to: but as it is not the intention of the advertiser to gratify idle curiosity, no farther particulars will be entered into, until after an interview between the parties.”

“ This is capital!” said Lord Tom. “ We have seen hundreds of men advertising for wives, but the lady being the applicant is something new. However, she is evidently no fool; she is determined to see her man before she explains herself. You, my dear Brag, must be the recipient of her wishes and sorrows. We have just concluded a reply, fixing a meeting upon Waterloo Bridge, a locality chosen in preference to any of the Parks, squares, or gardens, on account of its solitude,—a quality which has reduced it as a speculation to worse than *nil*, which, considering it is one of the most splendid ornaments of the metropolis, is most deeply to be regretted.”

Jack was delighted at being fixed upon to talk over the fair advertiser; his self-acknowledged invincibility was admitted. It was his particular *forte*—and it was speedily arranged that his three companions should remain at a convenient distance until the parley

should have proceeded to a certain extent, when they were *manfully* to avow themselves confederates in the scheme, and eventually drive the rash damsel "fainting from the ground."

It must be confessed that the system of mate-hunting through the medium of the newspapers, is one which not unnaturally subjects its practitioners to the assaults of the mischievous and merciless. Whether any of the negotiations, of which such notices are the precursors, terminate satisfactorily,—that is to say, in the union of the parties—it is impossible to say; but it does seem, for people who have eyes and ears and hands and tongues, the strangest possible course of proceeding.

Jack, who in all his antics kept his eye upon the main chance, was by no means the less inclined to the performance of this hoax upon the defenceless innocence of the yet unknown fair-one, by a notion which flashed into his mind, that it might turn out that she really was handsome and rich: a notion which, to be sure, was rather romantic, inasmuch as it would appear that a lady possessing those qualifications—or even one, provided it were the latter—need not have had recourse to a public proclamation of her wish for a husband. Something, however might come of it: it was the opening of a new field for the exertion of his talents, and the display would, he felt certain, place him a step or two higher in the estimation of his noble sporting friends.

The letter, addressed as desired, was despatched, the postage paid, the day and hour were fixed, and the party separated to meet a few minutes previous to the rencontre, and arrange their forces, as has already been described; three forming a corps of observation, while Brag was performing his light-infantry evolutions in advance.

It must be quite clear to the reader, that upon such an occasion Jack took the greatest possible pains to make himself what he called "the thing;" every fold of his coloured neck-handkerchief was laid with the most anxious nicety of form and tint, every curl was crisped into its own peculiar place, and the whole of his costume made to look like that of "a genteel comedy" playhouse beau, which, as he believed, must be irresistible in a widow's eyes.

At length the wished-for day and hour arrived. Lord Tom Towzle and his two friends were joined by Brag at the corner of Pall Mall, and proceeded to the scene of action, where they took up their stations a few minutes before two—two being the appointed time for the meeting—and having separated according to the programme, Mr. John Brag commenced his amatory promenade on one side of the bridge, while his expectant companions occupied the other, but at a considerable distance from him.

It was a pleasing thing to see our hero settling himself and pulling up his shirt collar, then drawing on his glove, then twirling a little

switchlike stick which he carried, and then using it in whipping his own boots, shining with a lustre which Day and Martin might have envied. He had scarcely finished one turn when the London clocks began striking two, which at different periods they continued to do, for nearly five minutes, that of St. Paul's booming through the air about midway between the subordinates.—Another turn had been taken, and no fair one was in sight :—a small girl in trousers, with her hair platted into two long tails with bows at their ends, and a bustle, approached—she was evidently no widow; she passed on; Jack tried the eloquence of his eyes upon her;—then came a tall, gaunt woman, with a poodle dog. Jack looked at her, but she made no sign. At last there appeared a fine portly-looking dame, dressed in a coquelicot bonnet, topped up with white and green feathers, a lavender-coloured pelisse, and buff-coloured boots. The friends in the distance were convinced that this was *the person*. She looked behind her and before her, and first on one side, and then on the other, and proceeded at a steady pace. She drew a full-sized, whitefaced watch from her bosom, and gazed upon its dial, and then tossed her well-plumed head with an air of impatience and surprise at the non-appearance of her summoner.

John Brag, Esq. beheld the vision, and if he had seen all the dæmons of the Hartz Forest pemmican'd into one plump lady, he could not have felt more horror and dismay. By what fatal accident, what evil coincidence, it should so have occurred, he could not imagine;—the extensive being before him, and now fast approaching, was neither more nor less than his respectable mother.

What the deuce could have brought her so far from home, and so wonderfully fine in her dress, Jack could not imagine; the question was, what was to be done? If he advanced, another minute would bring him in contact, and into conversation, with his parent; if he retreated, he must fall back upon his friends, and she would inevitably follow and accost him. The brightness of his genius came to his aid in this unexpected dilemma—he resolved instantly to join her, turn round with her, and fall into the dialogue which he saw must take place, and make his companions believe that his companion was the real object of their expedition, the advertising lady.

This scheme possessed many advantages, for the very circumstance of his relationship to his companion would afford him an opportunity of exhibiting the ease and familiarity of his manner while talking to the supposed advertiser, which would convince his companions that he was proceeding most successfully in his career; during which period he hoped to set his beloved mother on her way on the other side of the water before they could come up to enact their part of laughing at the victim, which it was settled they

were not to do, until Brag should give a signal that the moment for explosion had arrived.

The ingenious performer, however, had reckoned without his host. When he and his mother met, the expression of her countenance was anything but agreeable: she seemed, in fact, as much mortified and annoyed by *his* appearance as he had been by *hers*: and with all his desire to keep good friends with her, and wheedle her away as soon as possible, he could not disguise the anxiety with which he watched the approach of the fair husband-hunter, upon whom, so long as his parent remained where she was, he could not of course play his tricks.

"Well, John," said the lady, "who would have thought that we should have met here to-day? I'm sure I don't know how long it is since I've set eyes upon you."

"I have been a good deal out of town," said Brag, acting (for effect with his friends) in the most civil and obsequious manner.

"What," said Mrs. Brag, "at your little place in Surrey. I suppose you are coming from it now—eh, Johnny?"

"No, not exactly," said Jack. "May I ask where you are going?"

"Nowhere particular," replied the lady. "Don't let me keep you. I am only out to make a call. I can go without you."

"I will just see you to the gate," said Jack, carefully abstaining from any gesture or movement which could in the slightest degree resemble the appointed signal for the co-operation of his friends.

"Don't mind *me*, John," said his mother; "it is so nice and airy up here, that I think I shall take a turn or two on the bridge before I go."

"My dear mother," said Brag, "you'll catch your death of cold. Let me persuade you to get off as soon as you possibly can."

"I like air," said Mrs. Brag; "so you go your way. Who are those men standing out there? Do you know them?"

"Those men!" said Brag—"what, those three men there?—no—I know nothing about them."

"Well then, good b'ye, John," said the lady. "Now don't let me keep you; it is more than a quarter after two, and I needn't be at my friend's till three; so now go—there's a dear!"

This was a puzzler:—the fancy his mother had taken to walk upon Waterloo Bridge seemed to Jack not only the most extraordinary, but the most inconvenient imaginable. He could not leave her without accounting to his friends for not having made the signal, or for the conversation in which it was but too evident to them he was engaged; nor could he, in fact, go near them without practically contradicting the declaration he had just made to his mother, that he knew nothing about them. He decided.

"Well then, mother," said he, "if you really *do* like to walk up

and down a little, I don't see why I should not walk up and down with you."

"Well, I'm sure!" said Mrs. Brag, "wonders will never cease, I think! Walk up and down with *me*!—why you have not done such a thing these three years. Why, we have never been out together since the day you took me down to dinner at Blackwall, and kept me shut up in an attic at the 'Artichoke,' because, you said, I wasn't fit to be seen by the company. No, no—go about *your* business, and leave *me* to mine."

"I am waiting for somebody," said Jack.

"Oh! that's it," cried Mrs. Brag. "I thought there must be something in the wind."

"I know you don't like spoiling sport, mother," said Brag. "I'm here on a bit of fun:—I'll let you into the joke. I expect every moment to see an uncommon smart body, who has been fool enough to advertise for a husband—eh!—don't you see? We've tipped her twopenny, fixing this, as the place of meeting: it's past the time, and I dare say she won't be much longer. Now, perhaps, if *you* stop, she won't come to the scratch."

"Advertise for a husband," exclaimed Mrs. Brag—"why, what *have* you been at? Did *you* answer the advertisement?"

"Clean as a whistle," said Jack, flourishing his stick, and shaking his head with an air of uncommon self-satisfaction, "smack smooth, and no mistake—eh!"

"What! appointing her here,"—said the lady.

"Here at two," said Brag—"the adorable A. Z. at the oil-shop the corner of Little Queen Street, Holborn."

"You did, did you?" ejaculated his mother.

"I did," said Brag.

"Well then, all I say, John," cried Mrs. Brag "is, that you ought to be ashamed of yourself. If you was a lone widow woman, how would *you* like to sit moping and mumping all alone, after having been used to sociability and comfort."

"I see nothing to be ashamed of," said Brag, "If people will make themselves such Tom-noddies as to put such trumpery stuff into the newspapers, they deserve all they get."

"How you ferreted it out, I don't know," said Mrs. Brag.

"Ferret what out?" Jack.

"—But *this* I do know," continued the lady, "the letter was not in your hand-writing."

"How the deuce do you know *that*?" interrupted Jack.

"Why, do you think I don't know your little scribbling pot-hooks and hangers when I see them?" retorted the mother.

"I dare say you do," said the son; "but how came you to see the letter we sent to A. Z. at the pickle-shop?"

"As if you didn't know," said Mrs. Brag. "Do you suppose I

am so blind as not to see through *your* antics? No, no : as I said before, how you ferreted it out I don't yet understand; and when you had, I think you might have been better set to work than to hoax a parent."

"I'm all at sea," said Jack. "What have you or your affairs to do with our fun?"

"Do!" screamed the angry lady, "do—why what else should they have to do with? So now you are ashamed of your spy tricks, and want to sham that you did not know who A. Z. at the pickle-shop, as you call her, is."

"I'll be hanged if I do," said Jack.

"Then hanged it is my belief you will be," replied the mother, "*you* know as well as *I* do, that *I* am that individual."

"You!" cried Jack—"you A. Z. at the pickle-shop!"

At this moment Brag's miseries were, as he thought, at their *acmé*—but he was mistaken. The instant he received the unexpected and most unwelcome intelligence, that the object of his diversion and ridicule, to enjoy which three of his first-rate friends had been brought to the scene of action, was really and truly his mother, his course was clear; apology and conciliation were the weapons with which he was to assail her, and having soothed her anger, he would walk her off the ground as speedily as possible; a course which he considered quite practicable, now that she must be convinced, however angry, that there was no use in her remaining on it.

"My dear mother," said Brag, "I am truly and seriously sorry for this affair. If I had fancied it possible—but I—really—dear me!—this is all very uncomfortable."

"If I thought you didn't do it on purpose," said Mrs. Brag, "I shouldn't mind it half so much."

"My dear mother," said Brag, "I do most positively assure you"—

To which point of assurance his speech had arrived, when, tired of procrastination, and satisfied that Brag had admirably performed his part of the farce, his three friends bounced across the road, and joined the unhappy creature, forming, as it were, a semicircle in his rear.

"Come, Jack," said Lord Tom Towzle, "you have had enough of this fun. Is he vastly agreeable, ma'am? Isn't he a nice little man?"

"What!" exclaimed Mrs. Brag, "you *do* know these gentlemen! Why, you little storyteller, you said they were no acquaintances of yours."

"If I did"—said John—

"If you did!" said Mrs. Brag—"why, you know you did:—and so these are the companions of your trick—the witnesses of your impudence!"

"Pray, ma'am," said one of the dandies, "do not flurry your-

self—we are not going to eat you ! we were only anxious to have the pleasure of seeing you, because, as we all want wives more or less, we thought, like yourself, we might as well take the opportunity of viewing, before purchase.”

“ Oh, Johnny, Johnny !” said Mrs. Brag, holding up her pink and white-stripped parasol in a posture of threat—“ you would do much better if you would but stick to the shop, and do your duty by me: if that was the case, you would not drive your poor mother to do what you yourself are most active to turn into ridicule. I’ll find this out—I’ll sift it to the very bottom: my belief is, that you have been pumping Jim Salmon, or one of the shop-boys, to make this precious discovery, in order to amuse your fine friends at the expense of your parent.”

“ Parent !” exclaimed Lord Tom Towzle—“ what ! ma’am, is—?—eh !”

“ How !” cried one of his friends.—“ What !” said another.

“ Why, you see,” said Brag, “ I—I”—

“ I’ll tell it you shorter,” said Mrs. Brag, around whom and her auditors a crowd of four or five of the diurnal two dozen foot-passengers were now congregated :—“ he is *my* son—and not content with letting an excellent business go to rack and ruin while he is cutting his capers, and leaving an anxious mother to a solitary life and melancholy prospects—here he is”—

“ Pray, ma’am,” said Lord Tom Towzle, “ in what line may you be ?”

“ Wax and tallow chandler,” said Mrs. Brag, “ including sperm and other oils, flambeaux, tapers, bougies, and sealing-wax of all colours and qualities.”

“ She’s mad, poor thing !” said Jack—“ fancies herself my mother ! Did you ever hear ?—go home, ma’am—go—and don’t expose yourself again by writing such stuff in the newspapers.”

“ What ! Jack,” said Lord Tom Towzle, “ is A. Z. at the pickle-shop, corner of little Queen Street, Holborn, your mamma ?”

“ So she says,” said Brag.

“ Says !” exclaimed the indignant matron,—“ it isn’t that you are much to be proud of: but here, gentlemen, here’s the card of the shop—I never travel without half a pack in my pocket—here, see—judge who is right now. Oh ! if his poor dear father could but get out of his grave in Cripplegate churchyard to see the use his darling son has put all his indulgence to”—

“ He would probably go back again into it, ma’am, as fast as he possibly could,” said Lord Tom.

“ For *my* part,” said the widow, looking at the slice of nobility which had last addressed her, “ I begin to think you are no better than he is; however”—

Here, an admonitory—“ Come—move on, move on,” from two

policemen on duty, put a check to the conversation, which promised to become more and more animated.

"Move on!" said Mrs. Brag, who at this period was in a burning rage, the flame of which glowed on her cheeks and sparkled in her eyes:—"yes, Mr. Policeman, I'll move on, and move off too; but it would serve that little whipper-snapper cockney son of mine right to send him to the Station House for what he has done."

"Go home, poor soul!" said Brag, trying what "dejected pity" might do:—"go home, and get cool: I'll come and see you soon." "I've heard that gentle remedies are best, eh!—the soothing system, as Dr. Dulcimer calls it, eh! Go home."

"Don't be a fool, Jack," exclaimed Mrs. Brag, "you'll repent of this some day. All these fine-weather friends who set you on to play tricks for them to laugh at, will leave you the minute your troubles begin, just as rats run out of a falling house; and perhaps they would not be so fond of you now, if they knew that your town mansion was nothing but a brass plate, and your little place in Surrey, a second floor over a carpenter's shop. Get you gone—get you gone! If you have no feeling for yourself, Jacky, I cannot help feeling for you."

Away flounced the indignant mother; and having squeezed herself with some difficulty through one of the anti-cheating turnstiles at the end of the bridge, bounced along Wellington Street towards the Strand, Lord Tom Towzle signaling himself, and delighting the spectators, by imitating, at the top of his voice, the crowing of a cock, triumphantly victorious in the overthrow of an enemy—an exhibition which has been more than once received with unbounded applause in a theatre in Westminster, which yet remains beyond the reach of the Licensor.

"Well, now," said one of Jack's three friends, "who is this old catamaran? Why does she insist upon being your mother?—is it because her name is the same?—or?"

Here again was Jack puzzled most wonderfully. To renounce her as a parent, and denounce her as a cheat, was something too strong even for his assurance.

"—Why," said our hero, "I believe, if truth were to be told, she is my mother."

"Truth to be told!" said Lord Tom, "why, Jack, although there may, in these wicked days, be something like reason in the proverb that says, 'it is a wise child who knows his own father,'—the adage cannot hold good as regards the female parent;—there can be no great doubt about *that*."

"Why," said Jack again, who generally began his speeches with why,—why, he knew not,—“why, you see, my mother”—it was not feeling, it was not tenderness, nor even affection, which held him back, or checked the tongue on which some flippant falsehood

was gathering—it was instinct,—not better in its character perhaps (if so good) than that of a chimpanzee, but it was enough to paralyze his efforts to shuffle off the relationship between himself and the maltreated A. Z. at the pickle-shop at the corner of Little Queen Street, Holborn—"Why," again said Jack, "I am sorry we made so bad a shot,—because I believe it is a good deal my own fault—I have driven her to it, eh! Can't keep at work and"—

Brag had now fallen into his own trap; his impudence for once failed him, and he stood confessed the son of the determined husband-hunting widow of the deceased tallow-chandler.

"But, Jack," said Lord Tom, "what did your amiable parent mean by the brass plate, and the carpenter's shop—the mansion and the villa?"

"Oh, that," said Jack, "was all passion. When a woman's back's up, she'll say anything, no matter what. I am sorry it has happened, because it has exposed her, and certainly has not come off the bat, clean, smack smooth, and no mistake."

"No, that you cannot say," said Lord Tom; "however, never mind it; the old lady will forgive you. You must go and see her, and make it up. Suppose we all go in a body and apologise, and I'll explain to her the circumstances of the affair, and convince her that you really were totally ignorant that *she* was the advertiser, eh! Shall we do *that*?"

This proposition produced a violent accession to Jack's already raging fever. The thought of Lord Tom Towzle and the two "nobs," as he called them, proceeding *en masse* through the shop to the back-parlour before mentioned, under the row of wooden candles fluttering in the breeze, was perfect misery to him.

"No, no," said Brag, "by no means! I have always noticed that a woman cools soonest when left alone.—My mother," said Brag, assuming a new tone, and which he thought to be the wisest, "is a woman of what you call strong feeling—mighty high—old family—and proud as Lucifer. She's in a passion; and when she is out of it I'll go to her—mollify her, eh!—smooth her down, and make all snug and comfortable."

"—And no mistake," Jack," said Lord Tom. "Well, all I hope is, your nerves won't be shaken for the race to-morrow. 'Slap-bang' is the favourite; and riding a winning horse is no very hard task"—

"Nervous!" said Jack, who began as usual to rally—"what is to shake my nerves?—an angry woman? No, no: I know the female sex too well to mind a few passing clouds; and as for the *exposé*, as the French call it, it's nothing to me. My mother, as I have just said, is a woman of excellent family; how can I help her having been so silly as to marry a tallow-chandler."

This mode of putting the case set Jack's friends laughing with

him rather than at him. Like a cat, Jack generally contrived to fall upon his legs, however "high" the tumble; and they all agreed that he was perfectly right, and that he had behaved in the most moderate and judicious manner: and when they parted, renewed the appointment for the morrow with the usual cordiality.

As for Johnny, far different indeed were his feelings: the scene on the bridge was one which never could be effaced from his memory. The coquelicot bonnet; the striped parasol; the white and green feathers; the buff boots; the object of the visit; the conversation; the disclosure; the mystery of the plate, and the history of the villa; and, above all, the exhibition of the shop-card, and the conviction that he was the son of A. Z. at the pickle-shop—it was all vastly well for his tiger friends to laugh it off—but what would form the subject of their conversation after dinner that very day at Crockford's, where the conclave would be secured from his intrusion? What would be the nickname which was ever after destined to distinguish him in the contemporaneous history of society?

It was clear that his end, as far as that sort of "life" was concerned, was drawing to a close. Two practicable measures now presented themselves to his imagination, both of which are said to go by destiny—hanging or marriage—the halter or the altar, and, according to Jack's counterchanged aspiration of the *h*, it was difficult to discover his preference by his own pronunciation of the word. His mind was soon made up; and being assured that his secrets—as he considered the shop, the door-plate, and the villa—would, in the hands in which they had now been authoritatively deposited, be secrets not many hours longer, he resolved within himself that he had no time to lose in bringing the widow to action; and, as the reader already is aware, that let what might have happened, he never intended to ride "Slap-bang" over the forbidden lands of Wrigglesworth—that evening and the next day were to be devoted to the grand experiment of his life.

In putting this affair into execution, the natural infirmity of his disposition was remarkably exemplified. Convinced that Frank Rushton was satisfied of the prepossession of both Mrs. Dallington and Miss Englefield in his favour, and equally assured of the wisdom of Lord Tom's advice as to the course to be pursued, he determined in the outset to act upon the principles of the one, and adopt the practice recommended by the other:—that is to say, to play off both the ladies one against the other, but not to commit himself to either, by writing; it being evident to the meanest capacity (except that of Johnny's) that neither of two sisters; nor of two women, indeed, who were *not* sisters, living in the same house, and in circumstances such as those in which Mrs. Dallington and Blanche were placed, could possibly receive anything like a proposal, or even a probable approach to it, without communi-

cating the circumstance to the other. The mingled vanity and stupidity of Johnny, in the midst of his gaiety and amiability, prevented this single circumstance striking him; and, secure in his own influence over both the fair creatures, and his intimate knowledge of "females," he resolved upon Lord Tom's assumed doctrine, that both ladies being actually engaged to other men, neither would commit herself to the other by the acknowledgment of a passion for him: this decided him to fire both his barrels in rapid succession, giving the unmarried lady the preference by a few hours.

Having, however, revolved the affair in his mind, he again changed his original intention as to the mode of attack, and resolved to address the widow personally—and the sister by letter;—for, in spite of Lord Tom's *friendly* caution about writing, Jack did not feel himself quite a match for the tender delicacy of Blanche in the way of dialogue; having moreover, with all his avowed notions of practical advances, a most sensitive apprehension of a scream or a fainting-fit, which he feared might alarm the family, arouse the widow to a sense of his libertine insincerity, and explode the whole of his great undertaking,

Accordingly, in the course of the afternoon of the day upon which the unlucky affair of A. Z.—the alpha and omega of his destruction—occurred, he proceeded to one of his favourite haunts, and in pursuance of the scheme which he had now arranged, addressed a letter to Miss Englefield, avowing, not, it must be owned, in the most direct and explicit terms, but in a tone and language which it was impossible for any lady to mistake or misapprehend,—a devotion the most perfect and entire to her mind and person; alluding, in as good English as he could contrive to write, to the encouragement he felt he had received, trusting to her kindness and consideration, if he were mistaken, to forgive him; and hinting that Mr. Rushton himself was not altogether unconscious of the preference of which he felt so proud.

This he despatched before he slept, which he did at his "little place in Surrey;" and when he woke from a sort of fitful slumber in which he had passed the night, he began bitterly to repent of a step which he had taken while under the influence of a kind of desperation. However, as it *was* done, he determined to "go the whole hog," and follow up this feint at the unmarried lady, which might after all be turned into a real attack in case of a failure with the widow.

Accordingly, at the earliest decent period for calling upon anybody, Brag proceeded to make his visit to Mrs. Dallington; but here again his courage failed him. His mind was made up to the deciding step of trying his fortune, and as he went along, he rehearsed—or, as they say of birds, recorded all the sweet notes in

which he should address her, if he found her alone. As he proceeded, his spirits mounted, until he had worked himself into a servicable state of amateness: he reached the door,—knocked—the noise seemed like thunder:

“He trembled at the sound himself had made”—

his courage began, like that of Acres in the play, to “ooze out at his fingers’ ends;” and the terror he experienced when the servant told him his mistress *was* at home, can scarcely be imagined.

The crisis had arrived; and as it *was* to come, perhaps it was better it should have occurred before any of his mother’s intemperate disclosures on the bridge had reached what Jack was in the habit of calling “the West end.” He mounted the stairs with his throat a little parched, and his hands a little cold; but when the door of the boudoir was opened, and he found his charming hostess alone, the sight was fatal.

“Why, my dear Mr. Brag,” said Mrs. Dallington, holding out her hand towards him, “where have you been—hiding yourself in the country? I believe you have some attraction at your place in Surrey, of which we here in town are not aware.”

The allusion was not pleasant. Brag—the undaunted, unabashed lady-killer—sat himself down in a chair opposite the sofa on which he found the widow seated writing at a table before it, and felt assured that, by some telegraphic or other communication, the fair object of his hopes and ambition had received the intelligence of the affair on the bridge:—so ’t is that

“Conscience doth make cowards of us all.”

“No,” said Brag, endeavouring to collect himself, “I have been staying in Hertfordshire for the last few days.”

“I assure you we have missed you very much,” said the lady, who, fortunately or unfortunately, as the case may be, for Brag—was, for reasons of her own, in the best possible humour for encouraging his civilities,—“you can’t think how dull we have been without you. My belief is, that your friend Lord Tom is the cause of your abdication from town: he is so fond of his shooting matches and his steeple chases, and you, we hear, are his prime minister: in short, he cannot exist without you.”

“Oh!” said Brag, looking very much obliged, and very silly, “you flatter me. I assure you I just do these sort of things by way of a start now and then; but—I—it isn’t my taste—it obliges Tom—and that sort of thing; but—I—I—feel”—

“What!” said the widow. “do you mean to disown your affection for a sporting life, who are, as Sir Charles Lydiard says, the very life of sporting?”

“Sir Charles is very civil,” said Brag, who began to feel conscious of an approach to his subject: “I don’t think *he* is very fond of

sport—of any sort," was added in a whisper scarcely audible.

"He is a strange creature, isn't he?" said Mrs. Dallington. "A most excellent man—kind, and all *that*—but *so* cold in his manner—I am sure he makes enemies by it."

"Why," said Brag, looking down, and rubbing his hat, I don't know what he may be to females—he is certainly—rather—eh!—rather"—

"Oh!" said Mrs. Dallington, "don't be afraid, I shall not repeat a word you say about him. I quite agree with you. Women, Mr. Brag," and the widow suited her looks to the word—"are fond of spirit and vivacity. The days of sad, sickly, sighing swains, are gone by: society is enlightened, and diffidence seems to be considered in these times merely a mark of stupidity. I suppose everything is destined to travel at an increased pace, and I, for one, admit a partiality for fast travelling, as far as *that* goes."

This was pretty strong encouragement to an aspirant who was in a hurry, and engaged to ride "Slap-bang" across a county the next day—but Brag was Brag, every inch of him.

"Yes," said Brag, "it's uncommon pleasant: I don't think, however, I shall ever be caught giving up horses for steam."

This sudden digression from the figurative to the matter-of-fact, evidently disappointed the widow, who, truth to be told, had never appeared, either alone or in society, so cordial in her manner to our hero as upon this special occasion, upon which, of all others, it was most important to his views that she should be so. The first opening she had given him for a little self-recommendation in accordance with her avowed taste, he had botched,—missed his tip,—and become prosy.

"I have got a good many shares in the rail-roads," said Jack.

This settled him, and, it must be confessed, fully justified his own preference for literary correspondence over verbal communication, upon tender subjects.

Mrs. Dallington gave a look; Brag, luckily, did not see it. A pause ensued, but, as our volatile widow was playing a game, it did not last long.

"I wonder," said the widow, looking at Brag with an expression of interest—"I wonder *you* have never married, Mr. Brag."

This bit of wonderment nearly took away his breath: his tongue seemed too big for his mouth;—he began to twiddle his fingers, felt his ears get red, and his nose cold.

"Ha, ha!" said he, and rubbed his hat again.

"So gay, so gallant, and so devoted to the fair," continued Mrs. Dallington, "I should think you had only to ask and command. I do not at all understand why you haven't yet thrown your handkerchief."

Brag, who did not in the least understand why he should perform any such operation, merely inclined his body.

"I have been married myself," said Mrs. Dallington, and although I soon became a widow, I am quite sure that where there are reciprocity of affection, congeniality of taste, and sympathy of feeling, no state of society can be so truly satisfactory and so entirely good,—I have no word so short or so emphatic for it as that—as marriage."

"It must be uncommon agreeable, I should think," said Brag, looking, "uncommon" foolish.

"Now there's Frank Rushton," said Mrs. Dallington, "a most delightful companion—a most accomplished scholar,—and, as I believe, extremely attached to my poor dear sister—and yet, you see, they don't get married. I believe that all you agreeable, gay men of the world, try everything in your power to turn the heads of poor girls, without any serious intention of eventually making them happy."

This voluntary confession of facts and opinions, delivered in Mrs. Dallington's most agreeable, off-hand manner, although it corroborated in Brag's mind all his former belief of the interest he had created in the family, so astounded him, that with the opportunity at hand, for which he had so earnestly sought, he remained a mere listener at the mercy of his idol.

"As for Blanche," said the widow, "as I have great faith in the philosophy which inculcates the belief of a love of opposites, I am sure she, tender, shy, and retiring as she is, ought to be over head and ears in love with Frank; but I don't believe she cares the least bit in the world about him. To be sure she has a right to please herself. She has a large fortune, and nobody to control her, and, I, think, would make a most admirable wife for any man who knew how to appreciate her. However, I know nothing about her views or proceedings; we have no confidences; we each go our own way. I never trouble *her* with my advice, and, of course, *she* never presumes to give me any."

"I am sure," said Brag, "you would make anybody in love with wedlock—I'm—sure—You wonder that Miss Englefield does not marry Mr. Rushton;—I—often—think—I do indeed—that—you—I beg your pardon—I mean Sir Charles—eh!—and no mistake"—

"Oh!" said the widow, "I quite understand you. Sir Charles is a good creature—but as for love, I don't believe he ever thinks of such a thing. Certainly he is not of *our* opinion as to gaiety and vivacity."

"I was thinking," said Brag, looking as white as a sheet, and crumpling his remarkably nice hat in a paroxysm of something between hope and fear, "—that—you—really ought not to permit—eh!—this—he is such an odd man—eh!"

"My dear Mr. Brag," said Mrs. Dallington, "there are secrets in all families."

Brag perfectly agreed in the proposition, and directly did there flit before his eyes coquelicot bonnets, striped parasols, buff boots, brass plates, green and white feathers, and a tribe of visions more horrible than Fuseli's fiercest efforts after a supper of half-boiled pork.

"There *are* people with whom we become habitually familiarized," said Mrs. Dallington, "but who never touch the heart."

"Is Mr. Rushton," stammered Jack, "one of those?"

"Why really," replied Mrs. Dallington,—"Blanche not being here to answer for herself—for although you never inquired after her, I ought perhaps to have told you she has been out of town for two days, and does not return till to-morrow,—I was not so particularly referring to *her* case."

This must have opened the eyes of a mole. Brag, in a moment, became aware that Mrs. Dallington could know nothing of his rash note to Blanche, and felt more convinced than ever that the widow was his own.

"The case" stammered John—"you don't—that is—really"—

"You are a most amiable creature!" said Mrs. Dallington. "I see how diffident you are of your own merits—how unconscious you are of your own power!"

"Yes," faltered Brag, quite overcome—"yes—am I—that is—may I—do I make myself understood?—is—that is—don't I—ah!—if—but"—

—"Sir Charles Lydiard," said a servant, throwing open the door, and announcing the worthy baronet, who entered the room with his usual mild placidity of manner, and after shaking hands with the lady, turned round, and beheld—his aversion. The look he gave Mrs. Dallington expressed all his feelings upon *that* point: nor was it lost upon Brag himself, who collected his hat, gloves, and switch-stick, and having gathered them up, made his bow, and left his adorable widow *tête-à-tête* with the baronet, perfectly assured of his triumphant success with her, and bitterly repenting having exposed so much of his heart to her less well-provided-for sister.

Never, to be sure, was there a more perfect illustration of the character of the swaggering pretender to *bonnes fortunes* than the melancholy proceedings of our wretched little hero. The ball was at his foot—the game was in his hands—and yet he, the slayer of hearts, and the assassin of reputations, cowered before the fostering kindness of his liberal hostess, and sneaked out of the presence of the man whom he believed to be his defeated rival, in ridiculing whom he had first joined with his mistress to take a step of which we shall hear more hereafter.

CHAPTER VII.

THERE are some people upon whom advice is thrown away, and who, holding themselves to be wiser than their councillors, rush "*in medias res*" where

—— "Angels fear to tread."

Mr. Brag, who did not want for that sort of intellectual quality called cunning, was nevertheless, as has been already made tolerably evident, favoured by nature with an overbalancing share of conceit, and when he had ascertained the tone of the widow's feelings towards him, and satisfied himself that his case was reduced to something very like "ask and have," he resolved upon taking the step against which his friend Lord Tom had so strenuously advised him, and which as a matter of assurance, was rendered "trebly hazardous" by his having previously adopted it with regard to her sister.

The Irish gentleman's definition of a bottle of soda water we will not stop to repeat, but it would have applied with tolerable accuracy to the character of our hero. Although he had extracted from Mrs. Dallington what he believed to be quite sufficient to justify his best hopes, he felt in the solitude of his "little place in Surrey" a consciousness of inability to conduct the storm personally, or carry her heart by a *coup de main*—unless, indeed, a letter might be so considered—and therefore, spite of the advice of his experienced Mentor, he proceeded to address the fair widow in an epistle, a repetition of which it is not necessary to inflict upon the reader, but which contained a distinct declaration and a formal proposal.

Mr. Brag had now shot his bolt, and nothing remained but to see its effect. It must be admitted that even he was in some sort nervous and fidgety; but that happy self-satisfaction, which when he was not required to make an effort never forsook him, kept his spirits on the "credit side of the account." The letter, however, was gone—past recall—and therefore the next wisest thing to not sending it in the first instance, was to live upon the hopes of its success.

Upon the popular "wheel within wheel" system, the widow had acted so as to induce the declaration which it contained, satisfied that by "playing" her baronet upon the occasion, she might "land" him,—but certainly not prepared to find that Blanche was placed in a similar position. As things turned out, the effect it produced was striking.

Blanche had just returned from her two days' visit to the country. The moment she entered the house, she hastened to her sister's boudoir, where she found her in the very act of reading, with evident marks of amazement and exultation, the avowal of Mr. Brag's affections.

"My dear Blanche," exclaimed Mrs. Dallington, "you are arrived at the very moment to congratulate me on a conquest. I have received a proposal"—

"What!" said Blanche, "from Sir Charles?"

"No," replied, her sister, in a tone which certainly conveyed the idea that she wished she had:—"I think you will guess without much difficulty, knowing the man."

"The Fates are propitious," said Blanche; "I too have been so fortunate as to merit the decided approbation of a lover, who declares the happiness of his life, and the value of his existence, depend upon my answer."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Mrs. Dallington;—"why, *my* worshipper uses the very same expression. Yes—here it is:—"The happiness of my life, and the value of my existence, depend upon your answer."

"That is curious," said Blanche; "may I ask who the tender swain is?"

"Guess," said Mrs. Dallington.

"I cannot," replied her sister.

"What! not our exquisite little friend Brag!" said Mrs. Dallington. "I was always sure how our acquaintance would end: I wonder it did not strike *you*."

"Why," said Blanche, "the reason my suspicions did not lead that way is rather a good one—he has made me a proposal."

"When did you receive it?" said the widow.

"Yesterday," replied Blanche, "it was forwarded to me from town."

"I suppose it is a circular," said the widow.

"No, no," said Blanche, "mine is the original, your is the copy."

"What *can* the man mean?" said Mrs. Dallington. "Does he really suppose himself so fascinating, that, like the rattlesnake, he has nothing to do but look at us to induce us to drop into his mouth? Now if he had confined his attentions to *me*"—

"Ah!" interrupted Miss Englefield, "that is exactly the case; if he had confined his attentions to *me*, the affair would have been different: as it is"—

"No, no," said the widow, "don't misunderstand me my dear Blanche. I do assure you I am neither envious nor jealous. You should be welcome to all his attentions and all his affections—only please to observe that *I* intended him to take the step he has taken, and availed myself of your absence to lead him on to a declaration."

"For what earthly purpose?" said Blanche.

"Man," said the widow, "is an imitative animal, and everybody knows the force of example."

"But do you want anybody for whom you have a regard to imitate Mr. Brag?" asked Blanche.

"In the one particular of which we are now speaking," replied the widow, "I do. It seems to me, Blanche, that the lives we are both leading are full of worry and vexation : yours, because you will not encourage your avowed lover ; mine, because the man whose claim upon my affections I admit, will not avow himself. It strikes me that this most marvellous display of assurance on the part of our little friend may serve us both incalculably, by bringing both our gentlemen to a proper sense of their duty ;—to excite poor dear Sir Charles into a determination, and to soothe Rushton into a reasonable state of mind."

"I confess," said Blanche, "I do not exactly understand the course of proceeding by which this desirable end is to be attained."

"Let us both accept the little man," said the widow. "The natural awkwardness of his position must produce a disclosure of his schemes ; and what appears to me infinitely better fun, his vanity and conceit. That, which must happen, is, however, only a secondary object with me ;—the discovery of the affair will show our capricious lovers that there *are* men who, instead of hesitating to propose to one woman, are prepared to make offers to two ; and moreover, my dear Blanche, the very notion that we are exposed to such temptations will urge our strange friends to some decided step. You must accept Mr. Brag."

"Mel!" exclaimed Blanche : "I accept him—an antidote to everything like affection of any kind!"

"Why, my dear," said Mrs. Dallington, "I am sure he is very genteel ; he curls his hair, wears rings and chains, smokes cigars, rides races, and lives with Lord Tom Towzle. What would you have?—accept him you must."

"Never!" cried Blanche.

"You must, my dear girl," replied Mrs. Dallington, "and so will I :—yes, both of us—he is too charming to be monopolized by one. You must write to him."

"A billet-doux," enquired Blanche.

"Exactly so," said Mrs. Dallington. "Let us both be desperately in love with Lord Tom's tiger : you will see how odiously jealous Rushton will be in a day, and Sir Charles.—Oh! never mind ; write—write—write, and I will dictate."

"Write what, my dear sister?" asked Miss Englefield.

"A civil acceptance of his offer," said Mrs. Dallington, "couched in terms becoming the gratitude of a young lady of small pretensions."

"I am infinitely obliged to you, my dear sister," said Blanche, "but really"—

"Really," interrupted Mrs. Dallington, "you must allow *me* to be the best judge of what is best suited to my juniors ; so sit you down and write, and I will dictate."

"But what will the world say?" asked Blanche.

"What world, my dear?" said Mrs. Dallington—"Mr. Brag's world—or the world at large? What the one chooses to say will signify nothing to us; and what we may choose to do will signify as little to the other. Trust in *me*; be assured that I will not mislead you, whatever may be my intentions with respect to your scarecrow of a lover."

"My lover!" cried Blanche, colouring crimson at the imputation—"your lover too!"

"Both," said the widow. "Now sit down; rely upon it, it is a kindness sometimes to be cruel: so write."

Blanche, almost unresistingly, seated herself at the very identical table at which Jack had found Mrs. Dallington established the day before; and mechanically arranging the writing materials, looked at her sister with an expression of unconsciousness of what she was to say, and of enquiry as to the words she was to set down.

"Are you ready to begin?" said the widow.

"Yes," said Blanche—"to obey your instructions most dutifully."

"Now, then," said Mrs. Dallington, "write:—'I scarcely know how to reply to your flattering letter.'

"I am sure I shall do it all wrong," said Blanche writing.—

"I have struggled for some time—"

"Some time," repeated Blanche—"struggled with what?"

"Go on," said Mrs. Dallington:—"for some time with my feelings,—but the manner in which Mr. Rushton, whom you have often seen here, conducts himself towards me is—"

"What would you have me say, sister?" said Blanche, hesitating. "You know, if nobody else does, that I love him, and"—

"Never mind that," said the widow, "go on:—'conducts himself towards me is such, that I can endure his treatment no longer.'

"My dear sister," said Blanche, "you are laughing at me;—you wish me to expose myself."

"Why do you think so, my dear?" said Mrs. Dallington. "You have told me a hundred times that he torments you to death."

"Yes," said Blanche, "but what I say to *you*, and what I write to this man"—

"Well," said the widow, "then put—'vexes me,' instead of 'tormenting me.'

"That is better," said Blanche, continuing to write.

"That any man upon earth would be preferable in my eyes," said Mrs. Dallington.

"No," said Blanche, tossing up her head with unusual animation, and throwing down the pen, "*that* I never *will* write!"

"What innocence!" said Mrs. Dallington. "My dear sister, we are only setting a simpleton-trap, and"—

"It does not signify," said Blanche, "I"—

"No, it does *not* signify, so write," said the widow. "There now—go on—it will be *my* turn next. Tell him you shall expect him to call—this evening. I will write him an equally tender answer, and make a similar appointment. What can it signify what one says to such a man under such circumstances?"

"But, my dear creature," said Blanche, "what an opinion he must form of us if he thinks we are both in love with him!"

"It is quite clear that he *does* think so now," said Mrs. Dallington; "so this will not make it one bit the worse. Here—make room—let me write mine: all you have to do is to watch the results of our invitation, and be as cold as ice to Rushton when you next see him. Rely upon it, my dear innocent, we shall have fun, and, if I mistake not, husbands, out of this scheme, which, moderate as my pretensions are, I must say I think admirable, inasmuch as it mystifies three men at once,—and all—all for their own eventual good."

"I believe you take a pleasure in tormenting," said Blanche, who was busy sealing her note, while her sister was rapidly writing her's in that elegant and unintelligible hand which is the universal medium of lady-like correspondence, when, to their surprise and confusion, the door of the boudoir was thrown open, and Sir Charles Lydiard and Mr. Rushton were announced.

"Hide your letter!" said Blanche.

"Me!" said Mrs. Dallington, loud enough to be heard by Sir Charles; "trust to my fidelity."

"By Jove!" whispered Rushton to Lydiard, "they are writing—writing notes and hiding them!"

"So I perceive," said Sir Charles, coldly.

"Well, ladies," said Rushton, advancing towards Blanche, "we have found you busy."

Blanche bowed diffidently, and finished sealing her note.

"What is the matter with you, Sir Charles?" said Mrs. Dallington; "you look out of sorts and out of spirits."

"No, madam," said Lydiard, "I am neither; only I did not know whether I might venture to break in upon your literary avocations."

"Quite right, Sir Charles," said Mrs. Dallington. "People who make up their minds not to pry into the business of their neighbours, are most likely not to be disturbed in their serenity."

"Miss Englefield," said Rushton, "appears to be of a similar opinion. I confess I am not of a temper to bear with such things. I hate three-cornered notes, if they are not addressed to myself."

"You are equally right with Sir Charles," said the widow. "I *am* writing a billet-doux, but I have just finished."

"Upon my word," said Lydiard, "it must be a most interesting affair. I think I never saw you more animated than you seem to

be while despatching this note: all I am afraid of is, that I have been the cause of its abrupt termination."

During this dialogue, Rushton endeavoured to draw Blanche into a conversation with regard to the note *she* was writing, but she avoided answering his questions; and supported in the course she had adopted by her sister's conduct towards Sir Charles, so completely damped the ardent spirits of her mercurial lover, that he crossed to the other side of the room, and threw himself upon the sofa.

Mrs. Dallington having sealed her note, rang the bell, and directed the servant to send it immediately.

"Now," said Sir Charles, "I have found it out—you are merely trying me: the note, after all, is destined for me."

"As you doubt me, Sir Charles," said Mrs. Dallington, "I shall leave you to discover the truth."

"I am certain," said the baronet, with much more animation than he usually exhibited, "it can be to no one else. I shall return to my hotel to receive it."

"Do," said the widow, "and justify me from your suspicions." Saying which, the lady, with an air of being particularly piqued, left the room by one door, while Sir Charles, convinced that she had taken some deciding step with regard to himself, retired by the other, leaving the other pair of lovers *tête-à-tête*.

The moment her sister left the room, Blanche rose to follow her.

"Stay, Blanche," said Rushton, "one moment."

"No, Mr. Rushton," said Miss Englefield, "I am too angry with you to stay."

"Surely," said Rushton, "you cannot be angry with my jealousy—a jealousy that springs only from excess of affection."

"No man," said Blanche, "can possess real affection for any one of whose sincerity he has a constant doubt. I have forgiven these mad fits twenty times, always hoping and expecting that time would show you your error; but no,—our very last quarrel occurred ten minutes after our last reconciliation."

"Recollect, Blanche," said Rushton, "the events of that day—the day before you left town:—there you were—the sought and admired of the party—speaking kindly and looking kindly to everybody except me, of whom, as I felt, you took no notice."

"Well, Sir," said Blanche, "and if I were cold, and even cross, you need not have been so greatly surprised, if you had recollected how you called me to account for sitting next Mr. Brag the last time he was here, and entering into a common conversation with him about some of his feats and enterprizes."

"By Heavens!" exclaimed Rushton, "how I hate that fellow—his easy assurance, his self-conceit: but the fault is all your's and your sister's. That very night there he was whispering his infernal

nonsense in your ear, to your evident amusement and satisfaction, while I, distressed and disturbed by your conduct, was losing my money at *écarté* with Lady Begbrook, and you sat laughing at my folly and agitation."

"I *did* laugh," said Blanche, "but I did not laugh alone."

"No, no, that's true," said Rushton. "I dare say there are minds and tempers that can bear these irritations—I confess mine cannot. Possibly I expect too much; probably I am romantic; but, I *do* say, and *will* say, that however charming I may wish my wife to be, I do not exactly desire that she should be anxious to make herself universally agreeable, nor equally delightful, to everybody."

"Really, Mr. Rushton," said Blanche, "these fancies of yours are unjustifiable and unbearable. I confess that it would cost me serious pain to terminate our acquaintance, in which I have, when you are rational, great happiness; but such conduct surely deserves to lose my esteem. I can neither smile nor sigh, walk nor sit down, talk nor be silent, go out nor come in, but you attribute some motive to my actions. They bring me a letter—of course it is from a rival; I dance with somebody—you are either angry or in despair. I am civil to Mr. Brag, my sister's visiter, and the next moment I see you wholly unconscious of what you are doing, crushing my fan to atoms in revenge. Oh! Mr. Rushton, Mr. Rushton, such conduct in a lover is but the anticipation of tyranny in a husband."

"Tyranny, Blanche!" said Rushton, suddenly softened into subjection; "what an idea!"

"I am afraid," said Blanche, "that our hearts are not formed to be united: we had better agree upon one point—to part."

"There it is!" exclaimed Rushton; "the truth is out. You have now declared yourself: you hate me—you cast me off. I knew there was some new attachment formed. Yes, yes—we *will* part, Miss Englefield. There is a woman in the world, thank Heaven! who has a better opinion of me than you have: from *her* gentle heart my wounded spirit may find relief."

"Oh!" said Blanche, "I am quite aware of that lady's name. Go, sir—leave me: let this be our last interview."

Blanche spoke these words with so much firmness, that she began to be afraid Rushton would take her at her word; nor did Rushton's answer much relieve her apprehensions.

"So be it!" said he. "I will conquer this feeling—I *will* love where my love can be returned. But, madam, I insist upon one thing—tell me, who is the man who has supplanted me in your affections."

"Why," said Blanche, smiling,— "should I do that?"

"Why?" exclaimed Rushton—"because he shall at least set his

life upon the hazard. Name him to me, I desire : tell me where he is to be found, and if——”

“Mr. Rushton,” said Blanche, “I wish you a good morning. Whenever you are reasonable, and can conduct yourself temperately, I will explain my conduct to you. In your present state of excitement, I must leave you.”

Saying which, the fair creature quitted the room, leaving the infuriated victim of love and jealousy in an agony of despair.

The moment she was gone, he stared wildly round. In the crowd of conflicting passions which now assailed him, anger was in the ascendant ; and, snatching his hat from the table, he rushed down stairs and quitted the house, swearing, almost audibly, that he never would enter it again.

It was clear that the project of the ladies had been so far successful as to set the whole mass of affections and feelings of the two gentlemen into a state of fermentation ; because, while this scene was acting at the widow's, Sir Charles Lydiard had been to his hotel, where he found no note from the lady, and whence, after waiting a much longer time than would have been occupied in its transmission by her servant, he proceeded to take his ride, with a distracted brain, having come to a determination that the next day should conclude his acquaintance with the avowed and self-convicted coquette, who had now proved what he had long suspected, that she was merely playing a game with him for her own diversion. In this critical juncture we must for the present leave them, in order to introduce the reader to some new arrivals, as well as to give him some information of the convalescent mother, her dutiful daughter, and the philanthropic physician.

The amiable person last named continued his attentions to the widow Brown and her daughter ; his visits became diurnally regular ; and the satisfaction he derived from the recovering health of the one, and the improving spirits of the other, assumed a character which became evident to both. The anxiety he expressed for their comfort, the assiduous attention with which he contrived little surprises in the way of excursions in the neighbourhood of their present residence, which he represented as conducive to the re-establishment of his patient, were marks of a feeling not to be concealed or disguised ; nor, to say truth, did Mead appear at all desirous of practising any delusion upon either of his new friends. It was perfectly clear that he had formed an attachment, which from its nature and principle promised to be permanent.

Mead had watched the conduct of Anne during the illness of her mother ; had attentively regarded the workings of her mind ; and had satisfied himself that she possessed every attribute desirable in a wife. Their acquaintance had commenced, and his acquaintance with her mother had been renewed, under circum-

stances which gave a deep interest in his mind to her fate and fortunes. Mead was one of those modest, unassuming men, who once in an age attain to eminence without having forced their way by impudent assurance, or having been pushed forward by favouritism or connexion. Success had not spoiled him ; and while rising to the first rank in his profession, he was the same gentle, unassuming, affectionate being that he was, while toiling up the "steep ascent to fame."

It was not that Dr. Mead entertained the unfavourable opinions of the higher classes, which it is the continual effort of the lower orders to inculcate ; but he felt the absolute necessity of something like parity of rank between the contracting parties to secure happiness in marriage. The daughter of a merchant, even though unfortunate, was neither so much inferior nor superior to the son of a country clergyman as to make the inequality of station seriously objectionable ; and in Anne, Dr. Mead persuaded himself he perceived qualities and feelings calculated to sweeten the draught of life, and which would worthily adorn the partner of his future days. In his conduct in this affair there was nothing of romance or violence of passion. Indeed his love was what a romantic girl would consider extremely unsatisfactory—it was rational esteem founded upon conviction ; and their intercourse was so unmingled with any of these flights in which such persons as Miss Englefield and Mr. Rushton were perpetually engaged, that, when the doctor made his declaration, it seemed as if it were the inevitable consequence of their constant association ; and Anne's acceptance of his offer, under the sanction of her delighted mother, was as calm and collected as if it were not the great deciding event of her life, and one which could only be looked upon as the happiest that had ever yet occurred in it.

It may be that this calmness, and her apparent unconsciousness of the wonderful importance of the match in a worldly point of view, might have arisen in some degree from the recollection which never fades from woman's mind, of her first love. Unworthy as he had proved himself, and changed so much from his former self, he still perhaps retained some hold on the heart he had betrayed, and would with callous indifference have broken :—these recollections might have had their share in producing the effects which, although Mead appeared perfectly satisfied with the gentleness of Anne's conduct, were by no means agreeable to her mother, whose gratitude to Providence for what had occurred was unbounded.

There was another point which was necessarily to be brought under discussion, to which Anne felt a diffidence and difficulty in alluding—the position of her brother George in society, and his close connexion with the doctor's heartless rival. These matters,

interwoven as they were with the probable renewal of her acquaintance with Brag when his sister should return to England, and the consciousness that she had committed herself by an acknowledgment of her attachment to him, preyed upon her spirits, and the brightness of her present prospects was marred by clouds, which, like the few existing professors of Nauscopy, she could behold in the far distance before they were visible to ordinary eyes. To the suspense in which the heart and mind are constantly kept by a protracted anticipation of coming evils, which, however remote, are sure to come, poor Anne, it must be owned, was a victim, and her efforts to rally from it were altogether unavailing.

We have all felt that the most serious ills, or the most painful discussions, which have occurred to us, or in which we have been engaged, have, when they actually arrived, turned out not half so serious or so painful as we have expected; and upon this principle Anne devoutly prayed that the *dénouement*, which she regarded with so much anxiety and dread, should arrive speedily. Her mother, to whom she imparted so much of her uneasiness as related to the announcement to her future husband of her brother's rank in the army, assured her that nothing was to be apprehended on that score; that a man who had selected as a wife, the daughter of a distressed and needy woman, would not shrink from the fulfilment of his pledge to her, because her brother had been compelled to enter an honourable service even in its lowest grade.

Mrs. Brown was a woman of good sense, but whatever Mead's character and disposition might be, there *is*, in point of fact, as far as worldly matters go, a wide difference in the feelings of a man towards the female and male connexions of a family: a pretty milliner, or a smart actress, is a most agreeable *pro tempore* companion; and there is not a man who would object to take either, to any of the *guinguettes* round town, in the bright blaze of sunshine to participate in the enjoyments of a Richmond stroll, or a Greenwich fish-dinner; but it would be rather a difficult matter to induce the same person so drive Jack Twigg, the brother of the one—or row Bill Bott, the father of the other—to either of those cockney Elysiums. The doctor was everything that could be amiable and generous, but the fact that the real nature of George's service had never been imparted to him, but, on the contrary, the discussion had been carefully avoided, might of itself add to the objections which he might feel to having, by way of brother-in-law, a hard-fisted sergeant of a marching regiment.

How he eventually was made acquainted with the facts, and what was the result of his knowledge of them as affecting his subsequent proceedings, the reader is soon destined to know: but as they are rather prominent features of our little history, it is right they should have a chapter to themselves.

CHAPTER VIII.

A FEW days had only elapsed since the final arrangement of Anne's marriage, when the anxiety and worry by which she was annoyed in not having explicitly told her future husband her brother's history were terminated in a manner certainly neither expected nor anticipated by her.

It was evening when the doctor made his appearance at the Tusculum, evidently excited—that is to say, rather more animated than usual—full of something which he was anxious to impart, and still more desirous of imparting without flurrying his companions:—to use a homely phrase, he had a good deal to say, but did not know exactly how to begin.

The difficulty he felt, arose from two sources:—the first cause of his embarrassment was, the consciousness that what he had to communicate could not fail, with all his caution, to awaken a combination of feelings in the minds of his hearers, the physical effect of which upon the constitution of the elder one he anticipated with some apprehension; and the other originated in the feeling that he was about to avow himself fully acquainted with every particular concerning a member of the family to which he was about to ally himself, whose name had scarcely ever been mentioned, and whose history had never been touched on.

“I have news for you, ladies,” said Mead, after having talked upon some indifferent subjects, “which will surprise you; but I shall not tell you one word until you have promised me to behave calmly and temperately when I have told my story.”

“News for *us*!” said Mrs. Brown.

“News from afar,” said the doctor.

The blood rushed into Anne's cheeks. She was assured whence, and whence only, news from afar could come to *them*—Mead had heard of her brother—of the brother of whose position in society she had avoided the mention—he knew it all—and not from her! She felt humiliated and abashed, and almost shuddered at the reflection that from mistaken pride,—unaccountable in a character like hers,—she had left the development of the whole family history to chance, by which, Mead had become possessed of every particular, and was of course convinced that Anne, with all her good qualities, was not entirely ingenuous. As it happened, the circumstances of the case were such as not to give that colouring to her conduct; but, on the contrary, to lead the doctor to admire the diffidence and modesty of both mother and daughter in not having spoken much more of such a son and brother.

"Your son,"—said Mead.

"I knew it must be poor George!" exclaimed Anne.

"Your son is expected home almost immediately," said the doctor.

"Thank God!" said Mrs. Brown: "he is alive then and safe. Three years have passed since the date of his last letter."

"Dear, dear George!" said Anne—her joy still clouded by her self-condemnation.

"When, my dear doctor," said Mrs. Brown; "may we expect him?—and how have you heard this news?"

"Promise me, both of you," said Mead, "to hear what I have to say calmly, and I will tell you all. You have no reason for agitation; the news I bring is good—excellent! Now, recollect—no agitation—he is in England!"

A flood of tears from the two listeners followed this announcement. I am not sure that the eyes of the narrator were quite dry.

"Heaven be praised!" sobbed Mrs. Brown; "I shall see my dear, dear boy once more!"

Anne remained mute, and motionless, and weeping.

"Nay, ladies," continued Mead, "I have seen him—have conversed with him,—and only succeeded by pointing out the absolute necessity of forbearance, in hindering his coming with me;—to-morrow you will clasp him to your hearts."

Had not the one reproach rankled in Anne's mind, her happiness would have been as perfect as her mother's: as it was, she felt she would give the world to enquire more about him—about his wife—his family—his circumstances; but she was tongue-tied.

"Is he well?" said his mother—"and is his wife with him?"

"She is," said Mead—"I have seen *her* too."

Another pang thrilled through Anne's heart:—that wife was the sister of the man to whom she had herself been betrothed! The mother and daughter exchanged a look;—it was full of meaning, but incomprehensible to Mead.

"I suppose she must be much altered," said Mrs. Brown; "of that, however, *you* can be no judge, not having known her before she went abroad."

"She is a very lovely creature," said Mead; and observing a sudden change in the expression of Anne's countenance, he added—"not that I mean to make anybody jealous!"

Anne coloured: she felt that they were travelling over mined ground:—that the most natural thing in the world for George to have done when he found out the doctor, was to make some allusion to the brother of his wife with reference to his sister; and she began to worry herself into the belief that the whole history of the Brag affair had been detailed to her affianced lover, and that he was merely serpentineing his way to the part of the details at

which he might terminate his connexion with them altogether.

"I never saw a sweeter expression of countenance!" continued Mead. "Her manners are perfect: in fact, nothing but a constant intercourse with the best society can give that sort of unconscious ease and gracefulness which seem inherent, and whose greatest charm is the total absence of effort or affectation."

Anne heard, and silently repeated to herself the words, "constant intercourse with the best society," and her thoughts flew like lightning to the back parlour behind the shop, the dangling candles in front, the respectable Brag defunct, and his widow still extant; and the result of these hasty reminiscences was a confirmation of her belief that Mead was proceeding in an ironical strain, utterly at variance as it was with the general simplicity and amiability of his character, in order eventually to explode the whole affair, indignant at the treatment he had experienced, and disgusted with the connexion he had so nearly made.

"Why," said Mrs. Brown—and Anne would have given worlds that she had said nothing,—“she was always a smart, clever girl, and, I suppose, time has improved her into what she is.”

"Her natural genius," said Mead, "which, from some drawings I saw of hers, views of different parts of India, is evidently first-rate, has been—at least so your son told me—wonderfully improved by a residence in Italy, where art is so generally cultivated and understood; and her father, who, he says, was devoted to her, indulged her in a wish to reside upon the Continent for three years before his appointment."

The mother and daughter again exchanged looks. It became a doubt in both their minds whether Dr. Mead was suddenly seized with madness, or whether their dear George had caught the infection from the Brag family, and had been imposing on him in the most outrageous manner.

"I never heard of my daughter-in-law's having been abroad," said Mrs. Brown.

"She never could have been," said Anne.

"All I know is this," said Mead:—"a gentleman called upon me about one o'clock to-day. He sent in his card, and, upon seeing his name, it struck me that it must be your George, whom I had heard you occasionally mention. I had remarked that you did not speak much of him, and, as there are secrets in all families, I apprehended, although you never hinted it, that there might exist some disagreement amongst you with which I could have no concern whatever; still the similarity of name excited the opinion that it might be *him*. I immediately received him in preference to my waiting patients. He told me that as soon as he and his wife arrived in town, he proceeded to Walworth, where the people of the house directed him to me, as knowing all about you. Our con-

versation grew more and more interesting; and having, evidently to his surprise, and, I flatter myself, not a disagreeable one, told him the nature of my engagement to dear Anne, he insisted on accompanying me hither to clasp you in his arms. I positively refused that, and, by way of an intermediate bargain, he begged me the moment I had despatched my professional business to call upon him and his wife at Mivart's Hotel, where they have taken rooms. I did so, was introduced, and, as I have told you, am quite delighted with both of them."

"Mivart's Hotel!—taken rooms!"—another look was exchanged.

"Did he tell you," said Mrs. Brown, "whether he had any family?"

"I think he said one boy," replied Mead: "however, he will be here in the morning. I am not sure whether your daughter-in-law will come with him. She is in rather delicate health; and the journey from Falmouth, where they landed, coming immediately on a fortnight's bad weather in the chops of the Channel, after a long voyage, is something formidable to a person who, like her, has been used to all the luxuries of life."

Another look,—and an extra one from Anne, who looked at Mead to see whether there were any visible alteration in his countenance; for all he said was perfectly incomprehensible to her—if he were sane and rational.

"Did she," said Anne, particularly anxious to discover the extent of her communication as to her brother's engagement, as it might be called, with herself—"did she say anything about her brother?"

"Brother!" said Mead; "no, my dear Anne; George, your brother, and my future brother-in-law, I hope," (Anne blushed again,) "told me she was an only child."

"Did he?" said Mrs. Brown.

"An only child!" said Anne—and they were both more mystified than ever. Anne, however, who was more feelingly alive to the actual position of her brother, ventured a little farther: "Has George," said she, "obtained any promotion since we heard from him?"

"That," said Mead, "is a question I cannot very satisfactorily answer. His card was a written one, and the name 'Mr. Brown.' As I before told you, my dear Anne, the name itself was enough for me."

This little speech tended very considerably to calm poor Anne's doubts and fears. Whatever had occurred, it was clear that neither George nor Kate had touched upon the subject of her former engagement, and she began to take courage and feel more at ease than she had been during the earlier part of the conversation.

Mrs. Brown's delight at the prospect of again seeing her son was

not a little qualified by the mystification which Mead's account of him and his wife involved, and she longed for bed-time, in order to talk over the circumstances with her daughter. Her confidence in George's veracity rendered her suspicious of the doctor's accuracy; and out of both she established an idea that the Mr. Brown of whom they had been talking must be neither more nor less than some dashing swindler, who proposed to cheat the doctor, or somebody else, by pretending a relationship to the family with which he was about to connect himself.

Of course, so long as the conversation lasted, George and his wife were the leading subjects of it; not that the doubts and surmises of the ladies were at all calmed or diminished by hearing Mead detail the particulars of a visit paid to Mr. Brown, during the time he was at the hotel, by one of the most fashionable coachmakers in town, to receive Mrs. Brown's orders with regard to a carriage which was to be put in hand immediately, and finished as soon as possible.

At last the trio separated for the night, the doctor well pleased to have found in his brother-in-law a gentleman so agreeable and highly respectable, but wondering more than ever that he should have suffered his mother and sister to exist in the manner they were living at Walworth, and where, had it not been for the accidental circumstance of Anne's application to him, they would in all probability have been living still; and coupling these matters with the looks which he could not at length fail to see Mrs. Brown and her daughter interchange, he unsettled his mind into a belief that there must be some mystery in the affair, of which he should like to be master.

"My dear Anne," said Mrs. Brown, as she threw herself into the armed chair in her bedchamber, "what on earth can all this mean? Delighted as I am at the prospect of so soon seeing my boy, I am astounded and astonished at what Mead tells us. What can have happened to George, to induce him to talk and act as he represents him to have done this morning?"

"I," said Miss Brown, "cannot comprehend it. But I am even more surprised at what he has *not* said to Robert, than at what he *has*. He may have made money; he may be able to live at an expensive hotel; and he may be able to let Kate have a carriage: but one would have thought one of his first enquiries would have been after his brother-in-law. Now, of Jack, it is clear he never spoke; for if he had, and before Robert had told him all, the chances are"—(here her voice faltered a little)—"my name would have been mentioned too."

"My dear child," said Mrs. Brown, "how should George afford any of the luxuries of which Mead speaks?—besides, knowing, as I do, the tenderness of his affection, and the generosity of his heart,

do you think, if he had acquired anything like the property which this person seems to possess, that we should have been forgotten? No, no!—rely upon it, there is some great mistake in the business some where. George would never have left his mother and sister to work for their bread, if he had had the means of putting them at their ease."

"Besides," said Anne, "when the whole of the conversation of this Mr. Brown with Robert is put together, it does not appear to contain one word in allusion to our family concerns. It is true, Mr. Brown went to Walworth, and was referred to Robert by Mrs. Hutchins; but, except a simple enquiry after our health, he seems to have made no allusion whatever to anything that happened either before his departure or during his absence. My belief is, like yours, that it is somebody who for some purpose has thought fit to personate George, although, to be sure, it would be difficult to conjecture for what."

"I would rather it were anything," said Mrs. Brown, "than that my once honourable, high-minded boy should have endeavoured to impose upon Mead with such extraordinary falsehoods as those which it appears he must have told, if it be him."

"Besides," said Anne, who grew energetic and eloquent as she proceeded, "Kate never *could* draw; the things she took home from school were all done by the drawing-master: and as for the Continent, she never was even as far as Calais."

"It seems to me, Anne," said the matron, "to be one tissue of falsehood and pretension from beginning to end."

In this sort of condemnatory strain did Mrs. Brown and her daughter converse, till, twelve o'clock striking, they considered it proper to part for the night, in order to indulge themselves with a separate reconsideration of the whole affair.

The morning came—breakfast was eaten:—the doctor departed as usual for town, and the ladies began to count the minutes until George, or the person who had assumed his name, should make his appearance. At length the happy moment came; the old lady clasped her son to her heart, and the young one clung round the neck of her brother. George *IT WAS*—that was clear; and although his features had become somewhat sharpened by time, and his complexion was mellowed into a durable brown by the effects of the climate, he was not so much altered as might have been expected.

"Well, my dear mother," said George, as soon as he could collect himself sufficiently to speak, "what gratitude do we not owe to Providence! As far as Anne is concerned, I am delighted with her choice: I wanted nothing but her comfortable establishment in life to make me perfectly happy."

"And how is your wife, George?" said his mother; "our doctor says she is in delicate health."

"She is, I am sorry to say, a sad invalid," said George. "I hope, however, her native climate, unfavourable as it is to foreigners, may restore her. She was very anxious to come with me to-day, but she really is not strong enough to bear even so short an excursion."

"We have seen scarcely anything of Brag since you went," said Mrs. Brown, anxious as much as possible to soften down his infamous conduct, out of respect to the feelings of his blameless sister.

"I rejoice to hear it," said George. "I trust I never may have the misfortune of seeing him again."

"But I suppose," said Anne, who was always for peace-making, "you will see him for the sake of my sister-in-law?"

"I don't imagine," said Mr. Brown, "that your sister-in-law is very likely to see much of him. In fact," continued he, "I think, when she gets strong enough, we shall in all probability go to the Continent, unless perhaps I should stop a month or two in England for a little shooting."

Here the ladies exchanged looks of a similar character to those of the night before.

"To be sure," continued he, "whatever miseries and unhappinesses I may have undergone since we parted, my career has been one of the most extraordinary, and most prosperous, than man ever ran. How I have deserved such blessings, I know not."

"What rank have you now in the army, George?" said his mother.

"Army!" said her son; "you know I have left the army."

"Left it!" exclaimed the old lady, more confirmed than ever in the suspicion that something was wrong somewhere and somehow:—"why, then, how do you live?"

"How!—as a man of fortune should live," said George,—"upon my property."

"My dear George," said Anne, "what are you talking of?"

"Nothing but what you know of," replied he.

"We know of nothing, my dear boy," said Mrs. Brown, "but of your having been made clerk to Sir Cadwallader Adamthwaite's secretary."

"Why, my dear mother," said George, "I never made a remittance to you without writing fully upon all my affairs."

"Remittance!" said Mrs. Brown.

"Letters!" said Anne—"my dear brother, we have not received a line from you for upwards of three years; and, during all our distresses, your silence caused perhaps the keenest pang of all."

"Distresses!" exclaimed George—"why this—what—three years!—there have been roguery and robbery here! From the moment my fortunes changed, I regularly remitted you as much as

my means would afford; and although wondering never to have heard from you through the agent whom I directed to forward my letters to you, and to receive any you chose to trust to his care, I felt assured by his answers that your silence was a matter of choice; and, ascertaining through him that you were both well, contented myself with fulfilling my duty and gratifying my inclinations, without waiting for reply or acknowledgment. The truth will be easily discovered. This very agent, I find on my arrival here, has failed, and is recently dead; I have, of course, had no time to investigate his affairs, but I very much fear I shall be an eventual loser of four or five thousand pounds by him."

Here the ladies looked at each other again. Anne had read in some book something about shaking the pagoda tree in India, but it seemed as if her brother must have picked it clean.

"Three years!" said George—"why then you know nothing of the leading events of my life—of the entire change in my circumstances."

"I see you are in mourning, George," said Anne, who did not know how to ask for whom.

"Yes," said George, "I am sorry to say I am—for my father-in-law; a more generous-hearted, noble-minded man, never lived."

"In mourning for poor Mr. Brag, now!" said his mother.

"Brag!" said George—"I sicken at the very name."

"Oh, George," said Anne, "consider Kate!"

"Kate!" exclaimed Brown, turning deadly pale—"Kate!—Oh! Anne, it must be more than three years since you got any of my letters.—Lost, wretched woman!"

"Lost!" said Anne—"why, is not she at the hotel?"

"In her grave!" said George, "a grave which closed upon a life of wantonness and disgrace."

"Then you are married again?" said Anne.

In answer to this question, it seems better to adopt the narrative style, inasmuch as many circumstances had occurred during the period of George's involuntary cessation of correspondence with his mother, which it would be difficult for him personally to describe or explain.

The reader has traced the career of Mr. George Brown up to the point of his becoming clerk to the military secretary of Sir Cadwallader Adamthwaite. His readiness, activity, and assiduity, were so remarkable, that the general, who was one of the kindest-hearted men upon the face of the earth, took the trouble to ascertain the particulars of his history; and finding him to be in every essential point a gentleman, resolved on procuring him a commission in the army, which he did; and when it was obtained, and George appointed, the clerk was dignified into assistant military secretary,

and the assistant military secretary became one of the general's family.

It was during a year or fourteen months of probation before the arrival of his commission, that Mrs. George Brown (*née* Brag) began to evince very strong symptoms of a propensity, which even the thirst produced by a hot climate cannot justify in one of the "fair sex," as her brother would call them; and upon more occasions than one, George, on his return from head-quarters, found her in a state which, as authors say who are not able to depict what they wish, "may be better imagined than described." It rarely happens that when this vice exists in woman, it is the only one to which she sooner or later addicts herself. Grown reckless by habitual intemperance, her temper became violent; and impatient of rebuke, she taxed her husband with cruelty and inhumanity for merely remonstrating upon conduct so disgraceful to herself, and which must be so injurious to him. The most depraved women, however, find admirers, and Mrs. Brown, degraded as she was, found hers. The justification she attempted to plead for the irregularity of her life was, the delusion which had been practised upon her by George as to the place she was to occupy in the world; that her husband's rank, of course, excluded her from good society, such as, she said, "she had always been used to;" and, in short, having awakened from a dream of girlish love, she bitterly repented of the step she had taken, and became careless of everything but the gratification of her worst propensities.

This career did not last long. It would be neither pleasant nor profitable to enter into the particulars of her unfortunate case; a few months' intemperance brought her life to its close, and left George a widower, commiserated by his comrades rather for the sufferings he had undergone, than for the loss he had sustained. All these circumstances he had detailed in his missing letters to his mother, in one of which he had also communicated the intelligence of his wife's death to her surviving parent; but, with great goodness of heart and tenderness of feeling, avoiding all mention of the unhappy circumstances in which she died.

If George and Kate had given themselves time to consider the step which they unfortunately took, and had not been blinded by youthful love, they could have anticipated nothing but evil from such a marriage. Kate was evidently labouring under the belief that George was an officer; and the question whether his rank would enable her to live with people such as she had been accustomed to visit and receive, never entered her mind. She first began to feel her difficulties when she embarked on board the ship which was to take them to India; but even *there* the superiority of her manners induced a special attention to her, and infinitely better accommodation was contrived for her than she had any *right* to: in short,

from the moment they were fairly launched in the world, and she saw the path she had chosen, she became fretful and irritable, her pride wounded by finding herself unable to speak to, or associate with the wives of the officers with whom she was domesticated, and her vanity hurt by being permitted to stand in the verandah of the mess-room, to look in and see the company dancing when the officers gave a ball.

That it *was* humiliating and provoking nobody can deny, but she ought to have calculated upon such evils before she married; that is, if she knew enough of "the service" to enable her to appreciate the relative value of its different ranks: however, it is not my province to reason upon the wisdom or propriety of her early proceedings. Her ruin and fall may be fairly traced to her first great act of filial disobedience; and her fate adds another to the numerous instances already upon record, of the ill-success of run-away matches.

The day on which Ensign Brown made his first appearance in Sir Cadwallader Adamthwaite's drawing-room, was a most important era of his life; and when he found himself warmly received by the general, and presented *pro forma* to his daughter, who, of course, knew him perfectly well by sight, he could not restrain a feeling of regret that his unfortunate wife had not so conducted herself through what he admitted to have been a trial, that she might have overcome all the hardships she had previously endured, and have enjoyed the satisfaction of finding herself placed by her husband's promotion, in society from which her girlish thoughtlessness had excluded her.

Sir Cadwallader's kind act of justice to the merits of Ensign Brown gave general satisfaction, and met with universal approbation; and he was welcomed to the mess of his regiment with the most unequivocal marks of friendship and esteem. His official avocations prevented his doing regimental duty, and his evenings were occupied in a participation in the pleasures of Sir Cadwallader's hospitable mansion.

It might displease the reader if I were to doubt that he anticipates the result of this introduction of the ensign into the house of the general. He most probably guesses rightly; but as there are circumstances which render the case somewhat dissimilar from most others, he must be told the particulars.

Ellen Adamthwaite, Sir Cadwallader's daughter, was the beloved of his heart. Her mother had died young—a mother from whom Sir Cadwallader had received, besides the most endearing proofs of constancy and affection, the vast fortune which he possessed, and which enabled him to support *en prince* the highest offices, to which his noble profession and his gallant conduct had led him. Upon Ellen—the dear, the gentle Ellen—the love, the devo-

tion, which once was her mother's due, devolved at her mother's death: and although Ellen, who was everything father could desire, could not but feel conscious of her power over him, she was the least presuming of daughters, the most gentle, and most amiable of girls.

When Sir Cadwallader was offered the commandership-in-chief and second seat in council at the presidency to which he was attached, he accepted it, upon the chivalrous feeling of the greatest soldier, not only of the day, but of the land we live in—that he was the King's servant, and equally bound to obey his commands in the highest and lowest of offices; and although possessed of wealth which rendered the appointment pecuniarily unimportant, he readily relinquished his domestic ease and comfort for the more *negatively* active domination over an Oriental army.

While holding this appointment, his constant endeavour appeared to be to make everybody happy around him. There was nothing in the state of the country which seemed to require any of the austerity of military discipline; and the routine duty, although comprehending an extensive range was not that which required the vigilance and activity of war. He “took the thing easy” himself, and his greatest pleasure was to see everybody subordinate to himself do exactly the same. He never grumbled if he saw men in “mufti” or “white jackets;” desired every man to “make himself comfortable” when he came to dinner; and, in short, was about the best-natured being that ever melted under an Indian sun.

That he had taken a great fancy to Brown was clear. Major Mopes, whose death-like countenance never relaxed into a smile, but of whom Sir Cadwallader had the highest opinion, inasmuch as he saved His Excellency all the trouble, not only of writing but of thinking, had spoken very highly of George, and enlarged upon the meritorious course he had pursued in entering the army, as he had done, in order to relieve his mother, who *had been* in such a different position in society, from all charge for his support. This recommendation led Sir Cadwallader to talk to him: he found him well-informed, well-read, intelligent, and, in fact, a gentleman. The prepossession thus created, and which went to the extent of procuring him the commission, extended further, and the only phrase—it is a simple one, and best suits the general's feeling, is,—“he liked him.”

How often such prepossessions take hold of people, and how seldom are they erroneous!—how unaccountable are the sympathies by which such prepossessions are created! The moment Sir Cadwallader heard George's story, and received the testimonials of his merit and ability, he resolved to serve him,—and, in fact, to restore him to his place in society as a gentleman, which he pronounced him to be to his daughter, while he was yet his secre-

tary's clerk, as he was sitting with her in the windward varhandah smoking his chilum.

Ellen Adamthwaite, who, of course, saw George almost every day, accidentally, or perhaps incidentally, could not help participating in the interest which her father took in his fate, especially as the history of his wife's misconduct and death were matters of notoriety in the family, from Major Mope's frequent recurrence to the circumstance of the elopement from England,—and the commiserating "What a pity it is that nothing can be done to reclaim a person originally so respectable!" which was so often on his lips.

When George became by royal authority a gentleman, and Ellen found she might look at him, and even speak to him, without any indecorum, she certainly felt more than ever the hardship of his case while doing the duty which his filial affection had imposed upon him, even regretting, as he did himself, the cause which no doubt, was truly assigned for his wife's distressing direktion from every religious, moral, and social duty.

Nothing more readily excites an interest in a woman's heart than a bit of the romance of real life. George, selected by her kind-hearted father for favour and promotion, was brought into her society the son of a ruined merchant, who had received the education of a gentleman, and had been educated in the expectation of succeeding to his father's wealth. He enters the army as a private soldier, to relieve his mother from the burthen of maintaining him, and he elopes with a girl who is desperately in love with him. In his past life, therefore, there appeared a combination of events, sufficiently romantic to awaken a particular feeling towards him; and it was not many days after his domestication at the general's, before Ellen found her eyes resting upon his intelligent countenance much oftener than upon any other object in the room.

There was a manly modesty in George's manner—a sort of consciousness of what he might have been, of what he had been, and yet, of what he *was* which was peculiarly conciliating. Sir Cadwallader lost no opportunity of bringing him forward. It seemed, indeed, to be his study to make him appear to the best possible advantage in company, in order, as it might be thought, to justify the partiality he had evinced for him, and the good opinion he entertained of him.

In London the circle is so extensive, that although some hundred or two people whisper, and look wise, and nod and wink at each other when a flirtation becomes a little too evident, there are seven or eight hundred others to whom it is a matter of no interest; and, moreover, whatever people think, they keep their thoughts as far distant as possible from the flirts themselves. Within the

confined ring-fence of an Indian presidency, the slightest movement of that nature at head-quarters creates a universal sensation; all the worst passions of mankind are concentrated and pemmican'd in a little community of that sort; envy and jealousy assume the garb of friendship and esteem; and some miserable wretch, whose hatred towards one of the parties has been engendered or fostered by the remembrance of a slight or neglect, thinks it a duty he owes to so excellent a man as his Excellency the commander-in-chief, to mention to him what people say about his daughter and Mr. Somebody, whose society and conversation she happens to prefer to that of the considerate friend of her father.

Two months had not flown over George's head in his new capacity before the whole tribe were in motion. "To be sure," says one, "Sir Cadwallader is an extraordinary man:—he can't but see it." "Perhaps he does not object to it," says another. "La!" cries a third: "what! let his daughter marry a man from the ranks!" "Hush!" says a fourth—"the less we say about *that* the better: rose from the ranks himself." "Flogged at Chatham for stealing a cock turkey," says a fifth. "Hush!" says a sixth, "here comes his Excellency." Out turns the guard—ruffle goes the drum—rattledum slap go the muskets—and his Excellency is immediately surrounded by the little group in the full exercise of Koo-too-ism, who, the moment before, were exercising their historical and biographical faculties in commenting upon the folly of his Excellency's conduct, and in descanting upon the obscurity of his Excellency's birth.

That Ellen and George were somehow more paired off together, than any other two of the party, is most certain. In her conversation with him she did not disguise her esteem and regard for good qualities, which made themselves evident upon every possible occasion; while *he*, regarding her as a superior being, felt that sort of admiration which wise men say is not compatible with tenderness. The whole economy of love, however, is so intricate, so perplexing, so mysterious, and so perilous, that there exists no rule throughout the whole system without an exception.

George once or twice thought that Miss Adamthwaite looked more than she said; and though he had not sufficiently considered the matter even to assure himself that of all girls in the world she was the very last for whom he ought to encourage an affection, a word dropped by one of his friends on the staff, suddenly brought to his mind the real position in which he was placed. Then it was he taxed himself with selfishness in seeking her society; then it was he resolved to alienate himself from the delight which her conversation and accomplishments afforded him:—he would mix more generally in society; he would dine abroad whenever he could,

and would go out immediately after his official business was over; he would not go to tiffin, nor walk for an hour or two with Ellen in the varhandah : in short, he would not endanger her peace or comfort by giving occasion for remarks, which although wholly without foundation, might wound her feelings or injure her reputation.

It was not till the moment he made these resolutions that the real state of his heart became known to himself. It was only *then* he discovered that he could not act upon his own determination. When tiffin was announced the next day, Sir Cadwallader forced him to stay and partake of it—desired his daughter to lay *her* commands upon him :—then, by his Excellency's orders, they played chess together,—and then came in some visitors—George, of course, could not leave *them* :—and then—and then—in fact, the very first day after *that* in which he had decided upon a total alteration in his proceedings, was passed precisely as the thirty or forty preceding days had been passed.

It is a generally admitted axiom, that “abstinence is less difficult than moderation ;” and so it seems thought George : for failing in his project of philosophically decreasing his happiness gradually, he came to the resolution of abandoning it altogether.

The project George meditated to carry this “stern resolve” into execution, was one which did honour to his heart; but it required a confederate, and that very circumstance enhanced its difficulty. The moment he had ascertained the real state of his feelings, he more attentively—perhaps tenderly would be a better word—watched the dear girl to whom he was devoted. It was too true :—looks and actions which he had attributed to friendship, or even to a compliance with her father's wishes, now that he had ventured to think of love, bore a totally different character. Whatever dress he had accidentally praised, Ellen more constantly wore; the flower he preferred was always in her bosom; the songs he loved to hear, she sang; and opinions which he had once expressed, she adopted for her own.

Oh! those who have never felt the tender, galling anxiety of a state like this, cannot appreciate George's feelings during the week after he had made the discovery of his real position. What had he done?—gained the affections of his benefactor's daughter! It was not vanity that suggested the truth: the word once spoken that gave *that* turn to his thoughts, decided it. The fascination was over him—he was conscious that he was beloved. How he acted under this impression remains to be seen.



CHAPTER IX.

AMONGST his friends—for of a few associates he had many—the friend George fixed upon as the one to aid him in his rescue from the commission of what he considered the damning crime of ingratitude, was the surgeon of his own regiment—a man of sense and shrewdness, and one who was professionally taciturn upon subjects not intended for general conversation:—to him, after mature deliberation, George proceeded, and having begged his private ear, told him he wanted his immediate aid.

“What!—a duel?” said Dr. Short.

“No, my dear doctor,” said George, “I am ill—seriously ill. I have a constant pain in my side. I ought not to stay here, I must resign my assistant-secretaryship and go home for my health. I want a sick certificate.”

“Umph!” said Short—“I see—yes—on which side is the pain—left—right?”

“Intensely severe on the right side,” said George. “I cannot lift my arm perpendicularly without feeling the most excruciating torture.”

“Umph!” said the doctor. “You know what Abernethy said upon that point to the old woman who said the same thing to him—eh!—What a fool you must be to try!—eh!”

“I assure you, doctor, mine is no laughing matter,” said George.

“Let’s see your tongue. Umph!—clean as a whistle, and red as beet-root. Won’t do—eh! No tricks upon travellers—no ease of liver. Can’t do what you want—or what you don’t want. Did Sir Cadwallader send you to me?”

“No, indeed,” said George, “no human being is aware of my visit to you.”

“Why did you make a secret of it, eh?” said Short. “Every man has a liver; every liver is subject to disease. What’s the use of mystery?”

“I know of no mystery,” said George.

“Won’t do, Mr. Assistant-secretary,” said Short. “A surgeon ought to have an eagle’s eye, a lion’s heart, and a lady’s hand. Cannot say I have all those qualities; but as far as the eye goes, I think, I can see as far as my neighbours—eh!”

“I don’t know what you should make a merit of seeing,” said George. “I have no disguises—I wish to be candid with you.”

“Ah!” said Short, “now I see. You want to tell me you have nothing the matter with you: and yet you want me to give you a sick certificate—eh!—that’s it—umph!”

"My dear doctor," said George, "I believe you *do* know something of my feelings, for you certainly have guessed my wishes. I am *not* ill,—at least in body; but I may be saved from being ill in body, in mind, in reputation, and in conscience, if you will but grant your fiat for shipping me to England."

"I know," said Short, "you are as safe in *my* care as a baby on her mother's bosom:—but I say—those gray eyes and black eyelashes are the devil!—aren't they?—umph!—sweet creature! Come, no nonsense, or you get no certificate. You know it is all mighty fine your coming to me, looking as mysterious as a play-house conspirator; everybody here, except your two selves, and perhaps Sir Cad. knows the whole story."

"What story?" said George:—"no word has ever passed my lips—"

"No: but a great many have passed the lips of other people," said Short. "As for your own words, they are what we call superfluous—the eyes have it—eh!—umph!"

"What you say, doctor," said George, "makes me miserable."

"Very!" said Short. "I know—it makes every man miserable to have gained the affections of a charming, amiable girl, with a hundred and fifty thousand pounds:—it is quite a calamity! Poor Mr. Assistant-secretary!—you can't think how I pity you!"

"Doctor, this is no joking matter," said George. "It is useless, I perceive, to attempt disguise with *you*: you have seen or heard what I never suspected could have been even remarkable. If I wished your assistance upon this point when I came into this room, it is ten thousand times more desirable to me now."

"Umph!" said Short. "Why?"

"Why!" exclaimed George:—"we have so suddenly and deeply plunged into this discussion; you assume so much, and I have such perfect faith and confidence in you, that—"

"You are good enough to propose telling me what I know already," interrupted Short.

"No, not what you know already," said George, "but what my resolution is. The general, in the outset of my career here, befriended me, espoused my cause, restored me to society, and made me what I am. I am admitted into his family, and I evince my gratitude to him for all his kindnesses by—"

"—By permitting his daughter to fall in love with you!" said Short:—"how can *you* help that?"

"If such should be the case," said George, "it is my duty instantly to quit this place."

"To be sure!" said Short—"and add to all the other marks of your sense of the General's obligations by leaving his only darling child to break her heart."

"Do not talk in this way, doctor," said the assistant secretary, "it is I"—

"Pshaw!" said Short. "No nonsense: stay where you are—I'll give you no certificate."

"Then I must go without one," said George. "Private business in England"—

"Very private, indeed!" said Short. "I say, stay where you are."

"My dear friend," said George, "it is impossible! What you have told me now, in addition to a remark which I accidentally overheard, renders it imperatively necessary that I should go. It is the only favour I have ventured to ask of you, or of any man since I have been here: grant me the certificate, let me show it to Sir Cadwallader, and tear myself away from the only place in the world where I care to live."

"Oh!" said Short, putting his finger to his nose—"mutual, I see. Umph!"

"I did not say—"

"Yes, you did," said Short. "How do you know Sir Cad. will let you go?"

"If he could," said George, "which for worlds I would not he should, even fancy what is passing in this room, he would—"

"What!" said Short—"do you think he does not know what is passing in your mind and that of Miss Ellen's?"

"What is passing in our minds?" asked George.

"Our minds!" said Short—"umph!—that's it—*our* minds! The glorious *we* of literature is not more commanding than the '*our*' of you two. Why, you are over head and ears in love with each other, and you cannot help showing it wherever you are. I know the symptoms, Mr. Assistant-secretary—have had the complaint myself: so has Sir Cad.—a great practitioner in *that* way:—d'ye think he is blind?"

"I know he is everything that is kind and good," said George.

"Well, then, perhaps his goodness and kindness may go the length of wishing you to be his son-in-law," said Short.

"Impossible!" said George—"a creature he has made—"

"Umph!" said Short,—"don't see how that interferes—eh! You had better talk to *her* of your heart than to *me* of your liver. See what *he* says—or, if you don't like that, *I* will."

"Doctor!" said George, looking extremely fierce.

"I will," said Short;—"that is to say, I shall tell his Excellency officially that you have applied for a sick certificate; and, if you'll trust to me, I'll work it to the best advantage. If Sir Cad. is crusty, you shall have it. A pain in the side makes no show:—I can't tell whether you have a pain in your side or not. If he demur to your going, you shall be in excellent health; if he frown, and

expresses a wish that way, you shall be shipped for Cheltenham in a fortnight."

"I knew," said George, "you would be my friend."

"I *am* your friend," said the doctor, "therefore I want you to stop. You have enemies here as well as your betters. Your going would be a triumph to some half-dozen of the fellows who have been dangling after Miss Ellen for the last two years, and who have never got so much as a smile from her for their pains. No, no: mark me, Mr. Assistant-secretary;—put the affair into my hands, and you shall have the sick certificate when I think you want it, and not before."

George, it must be confessed, was incalculably surprised at the evident notoriety of an attachment of which he even fancied himself unconscious only a few days before. That the lookers-on see more than the players, is generally said, and here was a proof of the correctness of the saying: the very circumstance, however, of its having become a topic of general conversation strengthened, as we have seen, his determination to put an end to the scandal through the aid of his friend Short.

Had he not been bound to his military duty by military law, his retreat could have been easily managed; but it was absolutely necessary that the very man from whom he wished to keep his motives for going, secret, should be the person, and the only person, who could dispense with his services, and grant him leave to put his plan into execution. As it was, he had only to trust to the doctor, whose proceedings he endeavoured to accelerate by pointing out to him the dangers of delay.

That he was not slow to act, George soon discovered. At dinner the next day Sir Cadwallader began to throw out hints that he was aware of George's intention of applying for the certificate, and in general terms censured the conduct of commanding officers who, by permitting themselves to be parties to a deception practised under the connivance of medical officers, committed themselves as accomplices to what, after all, however strong the phrase might sound, was little better than a deliberate fraud.

"There's jobbing all over the world," said his Excellency. "One is never safe. Any fellow that wants to shirk duty, makes friends with the doctor, and out comes a sick certificate.—What's the matter?—liver, to be sure! As Short says, 'Who can see a pain in the side?'"

Nobody spoke, because nobody exactly comprehended what his Excellency meant by this gratuitous observation, except George, who felt himself get extremely red in the face,—a very natural consequence of being talked at by a commander-in-chief. Ellen did not know to whom the observation referred, and looked round the table to see if any of the half-dozen guests were affected. Her

look rested on George: their eyes met: they both became suddenly embarrassed, and Sir Cadwallader, who was good at a long shot, saw the glance and the response, which confirmed his suspicions, and decided his course of conduct.

The evening of this day was passed as agreeably as the evening before, but Ellen felt a difference in George's manner towards her: she could scarcely define what it was, or how to account for it, and yet it somehow connected itself in her mind with her father's hypothetical observation at dinner. The guests departed, unregretted by either of the lovers, for so, unconsciously they were; and the party was reduced to a trio, composed of Sir Cadwallader, Ellen, and the assistant military secretary, who always lingered last of the throng, were it never so late.

"So," said Sir Cadwallader, after a short pause, "I suppose, Mr. Brown, you felt the force of my little remark at dinner about sick certificates—eh! I hope you did—it was meant expressly for you."

"Sir!" faltered George, anticipating the burst of displeasure which he was assured would follow this announcement.

"Yes, sir," said his Excellency, "I understand you have been applying to Short for one of those melancholy testimonials of ill health, with a liver as sound as a roach, and the constitution of a ploughman."

"I assure your Excellency," said George, "that—I am not capable of deception upon any point:—I"—

"I don't know what you call deception, Mr. Brown," said Sir Cadwallader; "you are in good health, and you want the doctor to say you are sick, in order to quit your duty, and leave those who wish you well."

Ellen, who began to feel extremely uneasy, and think her presence at such a scene was scarcely necessary, rose to depart.

"Stay, Miss," said the General—"wait to hear what the gentleman has to say for himself."

"Really, papa," said Ellen—

"Really, Miss," said the General—"recollect I am commanding officer here; obey orders—sit you down, Miss. If you wished for leave of absence, Mr. Brown, why not have applied to me upon any fair ground? I hate shamming—eh!"

"It is impossible," said George, "for me either to extenuate or explain my fault. It is now known to you, sir:—there can be no difficulty in my going now."

"Why so, sir?" said his Excellency.

"You have exhibited my thoughtless—my ungrateful conduct, in its proper light," said George: "I cannot—indeed I cannot remain longer with you."

"Suppose, sir, I cannot spare you," said the General.

"My services, sir," said, or rather sobbed, George, "are of no importance. I—"

"That's matter of opinion," said the General. "But suppose I could manage without you—look at that young lady there—d'ye think *she* could spare you?"

"Oh, father!" said Ellen, who had sat trembling and cold, and pale, during the conversation—"I—don't wish to interfere."

"You don't!" said Sir Cadwallader—"not interfere!—you *do* wish to interfere, Miss. Lord bless your heart! Elly,—haven't I been young myself—eh? No, no, you can't cheat *me*, cunning as you are;—you love this fellow, and he loves *you*."

"Father!" said Ellen.

Brown said nothing, but looked as if the world was on the point of annihilation.

"Don't contradict me, Elly," said the General: "where's the harm?—where's the wrong? When I heard George's story, I was resolved to restore him to his proper place in society. I brought him into my house—into my family—and you have fallen in love with each other:—that's *my* affair. What then? When I first knew your poor dear mother—the best of women and of wives!—what was I?—a subaltern—the second son of a grocer at Gloucester. That was it, George—her mother was an heiress.—It sounds vain now—she fell in love with me, as I did with *her*: Well, I became possessed of her fortune; *that* enabled me to purchase up in my profession: and if it had not been for that, I might have been now a hoary-headed lieutenant, or at best a captain of sixty-two, going through my daily 'Halt—left wheel,' till my legs ached, instead of being here a titled and decorated commander-in-chief. What has that dear woman to whom, under Providence, I owe everything, left me?—this girl—this child of my heart—the dearest—the only object of my affections! Half a glance tells me the state of the case."

Ellen sat with her eyes fixed upon her father—George's filled with tears—and what gem is brighter than a soldier's tear so shed?

"Your conduct, sir," said the General, "has done you the greatest honour. I appreciate it in the highest degree. But it won't do—go you do not. If my Elly here is foolish enough to sympathize with her father in his predilections, and chooses to give her heart to an ensign without a shilling, what am I to do?—why, I'll tell you, Mr. Brown,—religiously to realize whatever wishes she may entertain, for the sake of her beloved mother, and to take care that she does not make a foolish match with somebody not half so worthy of her."

"My dear father," said Ellen—

"*Tace, tace!* daughter of mine," said Sir Cadwallader:—"don't coquet,—don't try to deceive me. George, come here:—I am

serious—take her hand, my good, excellent fellow! You, who have been so admirable a son, cannot fail to make a good husband. This is my firm conviction.”

“But, sir,” said Miss Adamthwaite, rising, “I”—

“Oh!” said the general, “you don’t like him! Oh! that, indeed, is a different affair:—then I am out in my reckoning, and there’s an end of the business.”

“I didn’t say,” said Ellen,—and bursting into tears, she caught her father round the neck, and her head dropped upon his shoulder.

“Come here, George,” said Sir Cadwallader—“come here!—take her from me! I know what she means:—she is your’s!”—“I have neither chick nor child but this beloved one!” continued the General, who seemed to have caught the infection of weeping—“I have nobody to please but her and myself. I think I have taken the surest method of doing both. I hate fine speeches—I don’t want thanks—so, my dear souls, God bless you both! I’m off—a syllable more from me would spoil it all. Talk over your own matters. Let these be the last tears I ever see you shed; and tomorrow the babblers, and tattlers, and scandalmongers, shall have the pleasure of hearing how the old general has been fool enough to give his only daughter to a penniless subaltern! Good night! my children—good night!”

Saying which, away went Sir Cadwallader, leaving the affianced lovers in a state of doubt whether they were awake or in a dream. George gazed on the blushing girl, even yet doubting whether she would fulfil her father’s intentions. Their eyes met:—those doubts vanished. Words were inadequate to the expression of their feelings:—he caught her in his arms and pressed her to his panting heart:—at which particular moment, Major Mopes, military secretary to his Excellency Sir Cadwallader Adamthwaite, and Captain Narcissus Fripps, his Excellency’s senior aide-de-camp, passed along the varhandah, into which all the doors and windows of his Excellency’s drawing-room opened.

This exhibition of mutual tenderness was, it must be admitted, something likely to make a commotion in a small circle. It, however, produced effects upon the military secretary and the aide-de-camp of a totally different character. Major Mopes, who had the highest opinion of George, and whose praises of his conduct had mainly conduced to create the interest which the general took in him, was horror-stricken. The idea that he had been chiefly instrumental in bringing him into Sir Cadwallader’s family, the happiness of which he was now so evidently attempting to destroy, filled him with regret and indignation; all he hoped was, that his companion, Captain Fripps, might not have seen all that he had witnessed. He felt that if the secret were confined to himself, George might yet be saved; that an appeal to his sense of honour and right

feeling would induce him immediately to withdraw himself from a sphere so dangerous as that in which he now was moving,—little thinking that George had decided upon doing so a week before.

The aide-de-camp, however, *had* seen the sight—which so startled him, that he, like the major, but from very different motives, did not speak a word. At the end of the *varhandah* they parted for the night, during which, while Major Mopes lay considering how he might best save George and Ellen, and smother the whole affair, the captain was arranging the manner in which it would be best to communicate the circumstance to the general so as to obtain the greatest possible credit for himself, and secure the immediate dismissal of his apparently favoured rival in the general's consideration. For which purpose, the ingenuous and ingenious gentleman, instead of going to bed, as was his original intention, returned to the barracks and to the quarters of his bosom friend, Ensign Honeyman, whom he had just left, in order to avail himself of his advice: thus, in the very first instance, himself doing all the mischief to Ellen's character and reputation, the preservation of which from injury was to be made the ostensible ground of his communication of the fact to her father.

Honeyman, who was the inseparable companion of Fripps, agreed entirely with his friend on the course to be pursued in order to overthrow Brown; and it was accordingly settled that the captain should, the very first thing in the morning, make a confidential report to his Excellency of what had occurred.

Meanwhile the unconscious lovers, whose parting kiss formed the subject of contemplation for both the gallant heroes, were thinking of each other and of the happiness which had taken them so completely by surprise, that they could scarcely think what had passed during the evening anything but a bright, yet baseless vision. The old general was the only one of the inmates of the house who slept soundly. He went to bed to rest upon the consciousness of having made two people happy—of having realised his intentions of providing for George—and gratified his wish of giving Ellen the man to whom, insensibly and unconsciously, she had become devotedly attached:—and, above all this, he revelled in the pleasure of having found out their secret, and anticipated any communication on the subject from either of themselves:—add to this, his just appreciation of George's anxiety to quit the only place in the world which was dear to him—to surrender all the worldly advantages it afforded, to preserve the being he loved from the anger of her parent, the malice of her *friends*—or, putting it as an extreme case, the ills of a marriage with a man who would have nothing but an ensign's half-pay, even if, under the circumstances, he could secure that—and the amount of Sir Cadwallader's self-gratulation may be in some degree ascertained.

The gun had scarcely announced the dawn of day when Captain Narcissus Fripps was up and stirring; there was no time to be lost. It was his turn to ride with the general before breakfast; the opportunity would be favourable; the success of the disclosure was unquestionable. The getting rid of George was his great object; for the captain's jealousy of the interloper, as he considered him, was not so much excited by his evident success with the young lady, as by the favourable estimation in which the young lady's father held him and his character: and when jealousy takes possession of the mind, it leaves room for no other passions but such as may be made subservient to its own ends, and which may be called into action for its own revengeful gratification.

Lavater says, that "he, who being master of the fittest moment to crush his enemy, magnanimously neglects it, is born to be a conqueror." Captain Narcissus Fripps, whatever heroic deeds he might have been destined to do in other days, did by no means display this evidence of future success; and although George was neither his, nor any other man's enemy, he resolved that two hours should not elapse before he was irrecoverably ruined in Sir Cadwallader's estimation.

The captain was a fair, sickly-looking man, always extremely well dressed, his hair assiduously ringleted on his cheeks and over his forehead. He wore divers rings upon his fingers, and sundry chains around his neck; his clothes fitted him as if they were his skin. His voice was drawling, and he lisped a little. When he talked, he pawed the air with his hands flappingly, something after the fashion of a kangaroo; and when he wished to be particularly lively, playfully patted the arm of the person with whom he was conversing, affecting himself always to be excessively shocked at everything that everybody said to him: in short, nobody could exactly make him out. He was considered excessively fine—evidently fancied himself a beauty, and was not quite free from a suspicion of aiding nature in the getting up of his complexion, by borrowing a tinge from art.

To have been treated neglectfully by a young lady of Ellen's qualifications, and that she should so readily have permitted such marked advances on the part of one so unquestionably his inferior in rank and station, (for the Fripps' blood had been ennobled in a remote degree from Narcissus,) was galling beyond measure; although his attentions to Miss Adamthwaite had never gone much farther than singing to her by moonlight, accompanying himself on the guitar, or making her a pair of card-racks, or painting a couple of rose-buds on the top of a cotton box. If she sometimes worked at those often-mentioned, indescribable strips of muslin which engage the attention of modern fine ladies, he would thread her needle for her; and in winding off silk on his thumbs he was most

assiduous and skilful. It was therefore the indignity which he considered the circumstance to involve, rather than the jealousy of a lover, which urged him on to ruin George. His fate, however, was sealed, and when the horses were at the door, Captain Narcissus felt his heart beat with anxiety for the discovery. "Lie still, little flutterer," said he, as he pressed his hand to his bosom; and mounting his steed, rode slowly off with his Excellency the Commander of the forces, to make their accustomed matutinal excursion.

Horseback, it must be confessed, whether the pace be a walk, trot, amble, canter, or gallop, is not altogether suitable or convenient for confidential communication; and when the captain found the general resolved upon adopting the penultimate pace of those enumerated, he felt the difficulty of breaking the business to him insuperable. Indeed, Sir Cadwallader was not particularly partial to his aide-de-camp's society, and preferred, when circumstances permitted, the company of Major Mopes, who, upon the morning in question, stayed at home to counteract, if possible, the ill effects of the representation which the captain went abroad expressly to make.

After a start of a mile or so, Sir Cadwallader pulled up, and suggested to the captain that they should dismount, and walk up to a rising ground on the other side of a fordable nullah, in order to get a view of the town at a point from which Miss Adamthwaite had made a drawing, but which the general had himself never happened to visit. This was more fortunate for Narcissus than even he could have hoped; the place—the subject—all naturally tended to the point he had in view. The "little flutterer" would lie still no longer: the aptness of the opportunity delighted him, and he was decided to avail himself of it forthwith.

"Were you here with Ellen when she made the sketch?" said Sir Cadwallader.

"Oh! dear, no, general," said Fripps; "I never come out upon sketching parties with ladies: I shouldn't think of doing such a thing."

"I don't see the harm of it," said his Excellency. "In Italy, Ellen used to pass the greatest part of the day in drawing from Nature: it would have been dull work if she had thought it necessary to have remained always alone."

"Oh, dear Italy!" said Narcissus, sighing and turning up his eyes—"the climate is so charming there."

"Climate makes no great difference in conduct," said Sir Cadwallader.

"No, to be sure," said the captain, "but—I am so very particular, I never presume on the good-nature of the dear ladies. Indeed what I see going on with other people sometimes shocks me—not

only on account of my own feelings as they regard delicacy, but as far as the honour and happiness of those I esteem and respect are concerned."

"Honour and happiness!" said the General,—“what the deuce have honour and happiness to do with a water-colour drawing?”

"Oh! dear no, general," said the captain, pawing the air, "I did not say they had; but—perhaps to the artist they may be some thing."

"I hope; if you mean Ellen," said Sir Cadwallader; "they have a great deal to do with her."

"Really, general," said Fripps, "I don't know what to say; but I have something to tell you which you ought to know."

"Why, then, out with it, Fripps," said Sir Cadwallader.

"Oh! I can't tell you all at once," said the captain. "I know you will be very angry—but I'm sure I ought to tell you: and yet I don't know how I shall ever be able to do such a thing!"

"What! is there a plot brewing, or a mutiny hatching?" said the General.

"Oh! no sir," said Fripps, "it is nothing public; it is—oh, I can't tell you!"

"Why," said the General, "I am not very particular as to time; only as you have begun, you may as well go on."

"Oh, it's so very fie-fie! Sir Cadwallader," said Narcissus.

"Very what?" said his Excellency.

"Very naughty, sir," replied the aide-de-camp.

"Who is it about?" asked his Excellency.

"That is what I'm almost afraid to say," continued Fripps. "I never was so shocked in my life!—I declare I did not recover myself for two hours after."

"After what?" said the General:—"do speak out."

"I don't know how to explain," said Fripps, wringing his hands like

"Some sad widow o'er her babe deploring"—

"but I'll endeavour."

"Is it anything about my daughter?" said Sir Cadwallader; who, although unaware that any scene had taken place, had long remarked the aide-de-camp's growing dislike of George.

"La, General!—you are such a man," said Fripps, "I declare, you seem to know everything by intuition."

"Well," said his Excellency, "what has she been doing?"

"I know I shall never be able to explain it quite," said Fripps; "but—I—think I may mention that—people think—I—that is, Mr. Brown—is—rather too free—and particular—and—"

"Umph!" said Sir Cadwallader. "If I don't find fault, and *she* does not find fault with his attentions,—that is, if he does pay

her particular attention, there is no great harm, in *that*, Captain Fripps."

"No, sir," said the captain; "but I'm sure you cannot guess. It is no fault of Miss Ellen's—that I am certain of:—but—you have no idea, Oh! upon my word—that Mr. Brown—I speak, you know, in confidence to you, sir—but—he is such a rude man."

"Rude!" said Sir Cadwallader—"do you think so? As far—"

"Ah! that's where it is," said Fripps, pawing and ambling about—"I can't—It is something so very fie-fie—you ought to know it: but, I declare, I don't know how to say it out."

"When did all this occur?" said Sir Cadwallader.

"I haven't lost a moment in telling your Excellency," said Fripps: "what I saw happened last night."

"Oh!" said the General—(every doubt of George's honourable conduct having been released by learning the date of the affair, whatever it was, which had shocked the delicacy of the exquisite Narcissus)—"was it very bad?"

"I never did such a thing myself in all my life, Sir Cadwallader," said Fripps; "and, upon my honour! I am sorry to have seen it: it has quite upset me."

"You didn't catch them in what the book-makers call 'an interesting situation,' Captain Fripps, did you?" said Sir Cadwallader.

"La! General, you are such a man," said Fripps. "I declare, how you guessed it I cannot think—but you are right: so the moment I saw it, I said to myself—well! if ever—Oh! gracious—to think of the man that his Excellency has raised to his present station?—to think of—"

"That will do, captain," said the General. "I am quite aware of the excellence of your intentions, and I thank you for your excessive care of Ellen's interest and prospects:—now let us look at the prospect before us"

"Well!" said Fripps to himself, "if ever I saw such a man!"—"To think, you know, of that nasty, great, coarse creature, Brown—well if ever I—"

"I think she has done it remarkably well," said the general, putting his hand varhandahwise over his eyes, to look at the beautiful panorama before them.

"What sir?" said Fripps, ambling about and twiddling his curls.

"The view," replied the General. "That bungalow in the foreground is a beautiful object, and she has made the most of it. It is odd enough, often as I have been on the Mulligopatemy road, I never was here before."

Fripps looked at his Excellency with amazement, and almost began to repent not having himself been more lively with Miss Ellen, to whose reputed fortune Narcissus would have had no earthly objection, even encumbered with the lady herself.

"And so," said Sir Cadwallader, returning to the subject, "you surprised my daughter and my assistant military secretary in an interesting situation—eh?"

"Upon my word, General, it was not intentional on my part," said Fripps. "I had just been taking some of Hoffman's capillaire and water, and a sponge biscuit with Ensign Honeyman at his quarters, where we had been singing some little Sicilian duets to the guitar by moonlight, and time flew so quickly, that it was near eleven o'clock before we thought of separating. When I came home I met Major Mopes at the gate, and we went together through the varbandah, and there—I really—I assure you it is the first time I ever saw such a thing—but there—there—Oh! how shall I describe the scene?"

"You saw Mr. Brown kiss my daughter, perhaps:—I understand perfectly," said the General:—"that's enough, Captain Fripps; we will settle *that* gentleman's affair after breakfast. So, come, let us take to our horses, and finish our ride."

It must be admitted that Captain Fripps felt disagreeably disappointed by the manner in which his Excellency received his account of the glaring indecorum which he had overseen: but he knew that he was a man of few words, with great promptitude and decision of action, and he still encouraged the hope of seeing his antipathy—the assistant military secretary, most unceremoniously expelled the house in the course of the morning.

Differently, indeed, had the friendly Major Mopes been engaged during the same period. He had seen and conversed with George, who, it must be admitted, elated as he was by the wonderful piece of good-fortune which had befallen him, indulged his playfulness of disposition by leading the major by a very circuitous route to the real state of the case; indeed he dexterously avoided coming to the point till he perceived, by his worthy friend's manner and countenance, that he must not carry the joke much further. When he had explained all, and, to establish the certainty of his statement, presented the military secretary to Ellen Adamthwaite herself, in the character of her affianced lover, the major's gratification and joy were complete.

The breakfast, it must be owned, was a trial to the principal performers. Ellen, of course, had been informed by George of the discovery of their parting embrace by the two staff-officers—Mopes still thinking that Narcissus, who was generally occupied by thoughts of himself, had not seen equally clear with himself.

The moment arrived; the general entered the breakfast-room. Curries, rice, Bombay ducks, Java red fish, eggs, European ham, hump and kabobs, were thickly intermingled with grapes, strawberries, mangoes, and plantains. The grateful fumes of coffee filled the atmosphere; and the tea, unchilled by the waving Punkah,

sparkled in its cups. Ellen took her seat with downcast eyes, after having received a certain number of paternal kisses from his Excellency; and Captain Narcissus Fripps, after having shaken hands with George Brown, deposited himself at the end of the table, directly opposite the gallant yet melancholy Mopes, major and military secretary.

As the meal proceeded, Fripps could not help noticing certain looks which were passing between his four companions, especially as even the countenance of the major was every now and then illuminated by a cursory expression more nearly approaching to a smile than he had ever seen it before. The General looked at George; George looked at Ellen; and Ellen, affecting to repress his intelligent glances by a half-comic seriousness, was blushing crimson.

Captain Narcissus Fripps began to feel exceedingly awkward and embarrassed. It was clear that his companions were in a confederacy, and that he was, by general consent, "basketed." Very few words were spoken, and nobody seemed inclined to break the silence. Narcissus felt assured that the General had availed himself of the first moment after their return home to lecture his daughter upon the dreadful impropriety which he had witnessed; but this he could hardly reconcile with the fact that Brown was placed next her at table, and permitted to look and talk to her, little or much, as suited his fancy; while the eyes of Ellen plainly exhibited the existence of an intelligence between them—which eyes *will* exhibit in the just degree to which such intelligence extends.

It all at once struck the captain, that upon a principle not unfrequently acted upon,—of doing what in certain circles is called, "wiping it up, and saying nothing about it," the General meant to take no public notice of the event which he had communicated, but that, instead of kicking the assistant military secretary out of the house, he would give him some detached appointment, which would have the effect of removing him from his present sphere of action, and his nomination to which, would be attributed to the General's continued and unchanged regard for him, rather than as a manœuvre to separate him from his daughter. This idea the gentle Narcissus cherished; and perfectly conscious that the embarrassment in which they all appeared involved must have arisen from his solicitude for the peace and honour of the family, and coupling these effects with the absence of all remark from the General, touching the matter, he resolved to act upon the same principle, assimilate his conduct to that of Sir Cadwallader, and take the first occasion to make him sensible of the caution he proposed to adopt, and the course he intended to pursue.

It ought to be mentioned that Captain Fripps was not a very great favourite with anybody at head-quarters. The major indeed called

him "Molly Fripps," and that too in a sad and solemn tone; and George was quite aware that he affected to despise *him*. The stiffness of the breakfast-party would not of itself, therefore, have startled him, but the character of the stiffness of this particular morning puzzled him exceedingly; for although little was said, so much more was looked than usual, that never did captain more greatly rejoice than did this of ours, when the repast was terminated by the departure of Ellen.

The young lady's exit was shortly followed by those of the major and George, and once again the aide-de-camp was alone with the General.

"Well, captain," said Sir Cadwallader, "I suppose you think my conduct very strange."

"No, upon my honour! not, sir," said Fripps: "I quite appreciate it—so considerate—and so wise—and so like your Excellency."

"I am glad you approve of it," said the General:—"but who told you the history of my proceedings since our return home?"

"Oh! nobody told me," said the captain; "I would not talk about it to anybody for the world."

"Then how have you acquired the knowledge of what I have done, and what I propose to do?" said his Excellency.

"I conclude," said Fripps, "that your Excellency means to take no notice of what I told you, to the parties themselves, but get rid of Mr. Brown in some way or other, so as to prevent the *eclat*."

"Prevent the *eclat* of an affair known to two or three people!" exclaimed the General—"no, no."

"I protest, sir," said Fripps, "it shall never pass my lips: I have too much regard for Miss Adamthwaite. It would be very shocking, I know, to let it spread; but my duty to *you*, as well as my esteem for *her*, would keep me silent as the tomb upon the subject."

"You need not restrain yourself, Captain Fripps," said Sir Cadwallader, "on *my* account or hers."

"I know, sir," said Fripps, "that you have been so kind and good to Mr. Brown; and what a shocking vice ingratitude is!—And to think of his venturing to embrace any young lady, and especially your daughter!"

"Did you ever hear an old song that I used to sing when I was a sub.," said the General:—

'My mother having heard that Colin he had kiss'd me,
Proposed to the youth that to-morrow we should wed:
To church then we went, paid the parson his fees,
And so got holy license to kiss when we please.'

"Oh! dear, no," said Fripps, shuddering, and pawing, and

making curtsying bows, "I never heard such a song as *that* in all my life."

"Well, it may serve to enlighten you then," said the General. "What if Ellen Adamthwaite and George Brown are about to do a similar thing—what should you say *then*?"

"What!" exclaimed the captain — "you *don't* mean, sir, — that—"

"I do mean so," said Sir Cadwallader.

"What! that delicate fair creature," said Fripps, in a soliloquizing tone, "to—"

"—Yes, is likely very soon to become *Brown*, Captain Fripps," said the General.

"Why, then, the discovery I made—"

"Was nothing very important after all," said the General. "Your kindness and consideration for her and me are nevertheless equally admirable; only if you had not gone back to your friend Mr. Honeyman's quarters, and told him what you had seen, before you mentioned it to *me*, our obligations perhaps would have been somewhat greater."

"Well, I declare, Sir Cadwallader," said Fripps, "I only told him because I—"

"Because you happened to be sure of finding him up," said the General, "and you were not so sure of getting hold of anybody else at that time to whom to give the interesting information."

"Oh dear, dear!—I shall never be able to look at Miss Ellen again," said the captain. "I admit it was—how could you have known it, sir?—dear me!—what a deceitful toad Honeyman must be to have betrayed me."

"We will not discuss the matter any further," said the General. "I agree with you that it would be irksome for you to associate with my daughter and her husband after what has occurred, and therefore you have my full permission to resign your aide-de-campship, and join your regiment. I am a plain, blunt man, as you know, and of few words."

"Oh, dear Sir Cadwallader!" said Fripps, "do not force me to leave you: everything may be arranged, and I—"

"I wish you good morning, Captain Fripps," said the General. "My daughter bids me decline on *her* part a scene of leave-taking, and will not in all probability return home until after your departure. Brown's name will be in orders as aide-de-camp this afternoon; and, as I am now allowed only *one*, you will see the necessity of marching in 'double quick.' Good morning." Saying which, his Excellency retired from the apartment, muttering humbly to himself—

"But never more be officer of mine."

"Well, if ever!" said Narcissus—"dear me—this is most uncommonly unpleasant! I declare I could scratch that nasty creature Honeyman's eyes out, for such a sly trick. I'll go to him—tax him with his conduct:—but I am sure we shall make it up before we part; because I am quite certain he did not mean to injure me."

And so Fripps went on murmuring to himself, until, to his utter dismay, one of Sir Cadwallader's servants made his appearance with his Excellency's compliments—wished to know when his "things would be ready for moving." This question was conclusive. The circumstance which had occurred—the awkward position in which he had placed himself by his tittle-tattle, and the intentions so evidently displayed in his conduct, all conspired to induce him to exert himself in fulfilling his Excellency's wish for his speedy disappearance. His servant was directed to make immediate preparations for the start; and the captain himself proceeded to Honeyman, to reproach and bid him farewell. Their quarrel was, as the captain had anticipated, soon reconciled; and from the door of his dear friend's quarters, Fripps, after eating a tiffin of fowl-sandwiches, raspberry tarts, and barleysugar-drops, moistened by some lemonade, took his departure to join his regiment at Bombay.

It is strange how much the loss of one, to a constant association with whom we have become habituated, affects us. Ellen, who cared no more for Narcissus than for any other officer in his Majesty's service, naval or military, and in all human probability much less, could not look at his vacant place at tiffin without a feeling of regret perhaps this feeling, considering the consequences his removal involved, as far as regarded his worldly circumstances, might have been strengthened by the recollection that, however innocently, unconsciously certainly, and most unintentionally, she herself had been the cause of his ejection. Certain it was, she was out of spirits, and George saw she was. He could not help feeling uneasy at the symptoms he observed, but his anxiety was considerably relieved when he had ascertained that his *friend* was actually gone, and saw that Ellen, when her George filled his chair at dinner, was as much at her ease as she could be, knowing that the events which had occurred during the day were most undoubtedly forming the topic of conversation at every other table in the presidency.

We must not bestow sufficient space upon the episode of our history, to dwell at length upon the proceedings at head-quarters until the day of George's marriage to Ellen was fixed. When the matrimonial termination to their acquaintance was announced as decided and inevitable, the public opinion of the forty or fifty estimable ladies and gentlemen, who formed the public of the place, turned wonderfully in favour of George. He was a most agreeable

person—so clever; and it was so judicious of the General to advance merit, and consult the happiness of his child. And at last the day came, and they were married, and proceeded to pass the honeymoon in the picturesque bungalow which formed the effective foreground of Ellen's last East-India view.

The happiness of this most happy pair—for so they were—was not, however, destined to continue long uninterrupted: a sudden attack, and short illness, deprived them in the third month of their married life of the kind-hearted, generous parent, the founder of their fortunes and felicity. This event, of course, decided them upon returning to England, and induced George to retire from the army. Having entered it, as an officer, much too late to expect in peaceable times promotion, even by purchase, to any valuable extent, he yielded to the solicitations of his Ellen, who had seen enough of military life as a soldier's daughter, not to desire a continuance of it as a soldier's wife. Her tastes,—her pursuits,—were those of retirement and quiet, and the blessing of being so much her own mistress as not to be destined by a Horse-Guards' order to pass ten or twelve years of her life in an East-Indian cantonment or a West-Indian barrack, was too great to be refused. So implicit was Sir Cadwallader's reliance upon George, that, at the old gentleman's death, he found himself, with some trifling limitations, in the possession of property, real and personal, to the amount of upwards of seven thousand a-year.

In this position was George Brown when he returned to England; and it may easily be imagined that the circumstances detailed in this narrative, when related by himself to his mother and sister upon the occasion of his first visit to them, produced in their hearts and minds sentiments of gratitude to Providence, by which a course of events so propitious to their beloved, deserving relative, had been ordained.

CHAPTER X.

HAVING given the reader a brief and succinct account of the prosperous progress of Mr. Brown, and deposited him in safety with his mother and sister, it now becomes necessary to give a glance at our hero Jack, and the measures he adopted under the peculiar and embarrassing circumstance of being accepted by two very charming women in the course of one afternoon.

For a few moments after the arrival of the second note—that from Blanche—the little man was greatly puzzled how to act. That the answers to his declarations were jokes he had not the slightest suspicion, and therefore his difficulty arose from the ne-

cessity of at once making up his mind. Unlike Gay's hero, he felt that he *must* say "a word" to both his captives: in fact, he was forced on the instant to decide, yea or nay—widow or maid. This was really a puzzler even for Jack, who scratched his hair half out of curl before he had got near a conclusion. At length he determined to postpone the *éclaircissement* until the evening, and in the mean time to throw himself in the way of Sir Charles Lydiard, in order, if he could, to extract from him his opinion of the widow's merits, and ascertain, if possible, the extent of his anger and vengeance if Jack should make *her* his choice.

For this purpose Jack began what he called his tour of the Clubs—but, in truth, that of their doors—for Jack had not as yet achieved the *right* of crossing the threshold of any one of them. Nevertheless, he was not an unfrequent occupant of their halls, into which, by asking after some man whom he knew to be out of town, or who did not belong to that particular society, he made his way; and having performed that evolution once or twice, without, or, as he considered, with, perfect success, he at length encountered Sir Charles, and immediately joined him in his walk towards Grosvenor Street.

In one of those amusing and instructive works upon natural history, in which we find recorded the traits of character peculiar to different animals, there is an account of a goose which had formed so strong an attachment to a Newfoundland dog belonging to the same master, that she never was easy out of his society. Neptune was conscious of this kindly feeling, and reciprocated it to a certain extent; and whenever they were together in the yard, *he* feeding, and goosey looking affectionately on, or *vice versa*, it was all very well; but when Neptune took the air in the street of the village or by the road-side, or went to refresh himself in a neighbouring pond, goosey *would* accompany him. Then it was too, that, after enduring the waddle and quack of his admiring companion for a certain period of time, Neptune invariably, as soon as he saw any dogs of condition or puppies of quality coming, put himself into a long trot, and dart round a corner or over a gate, in order to exhibit his dislike of the connexion. Sir Charles Lydiard felt very much like dog Neptune, when goosey Brag joined him: however, as it was impossible, without rudeness perfectly inconsistent with Sir Charles's character and disposition, to shake him off, he endured the commencement of a conversation, which in the end excited the best feelings of his nature, and awakened in his heart the tenderest sympathy for a much-injured friend.

As the reader will hereafter be referred to this important dialogue, he shall not be troubled with a repetition of it, here: that it *was* important may easily be imagined from the fact, that when Sir Charles reached the door of his hotel he invited Brag to come

in, and that they remained in conversation in his drawing-room for more than an hour.

The impression left upon Jack's mind by what he had heard from his "friend" Sir Charles was, that the loss of the widow would neither cause the breaking of the baronet's heart nor of his own head; and he was, as the reader may imagine, proportionably elated and elevated, and more particularly confirmed in his original intentions respecting his choice of that lady.

Jack felt as if he were treading on air as he paced down Bond Street to call on some other friend, in order to make a new confidence; no doubt; however, the Fates decided otherwise, for, in turning the corner of Hanover Square, whom should he stumble upon, but Rushton!—a meeting which, as he had magnanimously determined to leave him in the quiet possession of the elegant Blanche, rather pleased him than not. Rushton, whose, "affection" for Jack was, if possible, stronger than that of Sir Charles Lydiard, made a desperate attempt to get away from him, not only because upon a general principle he wished to avoid him, but because the impression on his mind was, that ridiculous as the idea might at first appear, he actually was the creature for whom Blanche had withdrawn her affections from him, and that if they had much conversation, his temper would get the better of the prudence he meant to adopt until his suspicions were confirmed, and that he might resort to the expedient of kicking Jack somewhat prematurely. The rencontre was, however, inevitable.

"On your way to the ladies, I presume," said Rushton.

"No," said Jack, "not till the evening; I suppose we shall meet."

"Perhaps not," said Rushton, to whom Jack's air and manner appeared peculiarly pert and vulgar,—and he passed on. Jack turned and kept up with him.

"Strange creatures, the females!" said Jack, perking up his head and smirking.

"They *are*, indeed!" said Rushton, as the thought of Blanche's affection for the burr which was sticking to him, flashed across his mind.

"'Gad, Rushton!" said Jack—(Rushton shuddered at the familiarity)—"wonders will never cease!—*you* are a happy man, with such a creature as Blanche Englefield your own."

"That's a sore subject," said Rushton, "and we had better not touch it. I know you are an admirable joker,—but jokes, especially practical ones, not unfrequently turn out ill."

"I know what you are up to," said Jack:—"down upon you in half no time, smack, smooth, and no mistake."

"I dare say you may comprehend my meaning," said Rushton; "but I repeat, that if you do, my present feelings are not to be

trified with; and if you do not, this is neither the time nor place to enlighten you."

"Don't put yourself in a passion," said Jack; "you never were more mistaken in your life."

"Upon what point?" said Rushton.

"About Blanche," replied Brag.

"Really sir," said Rushton, "you are treading upon very delicate ground. You have entrapped me into a conversation which it was my particular wish and desire to avoid in the present state of affairs; but you have now led me to a point at which I cannot stop. You have alluded to a young lady in the most familiar manner, who, in my opinion, has been exceedingly civil to you, and I really do consider, under the circumstances in which I am placed, I ought to know exactly the character of your intimacy with her."

"I shouldn't wonder!" said Jack; "it only shows how the longest heads may be puzzled. You'll find out all how and about it, before to-morrow—eh!—are you awake?"

"Awake!—I am," said Rushton, "yet I seem to be dreaming. Do you then admit that your acquaintance with Miss Englefield, whom you so unceremoniously call Blanche, is so near its favourable termination?"

"My dear Mr. Rushton," said Brag, "you are safe—at least, as far as I am concerned: there are more horses in the stable than one—eh!—are you awake now? No? I'll put you out of your pain then—I hate to be cruel;—never am, even to dumb animals, except when I want 'em to stir their stumps a bit. No, no: if anybody in the house has cause for jealousy, it isn't you. Will that do for you—eh?"

"What!" said Rushton, "am I to understand that Mrs. Dallington—"

"Mum!" said Brag, bursting to proclaim his wonderful success—"dumb as a Dutchman:—the widow's the winner, fifty to one."

"You are joking!" said Rushton.

"Not I," said Jack:—"thing settled, snug—smack smooth, and no mistake. I know you don't half like Sir Charles. I'll settle his affair; I speak, of course, in confidence—but so it is:—the thing is what the French call a *finny affair*."

"Surely, this never *can* be!" said Rushton. "What! after all the declarations I have heard her make—all her regrets that his coldness of manner so much damped her natural affection for him: after—"

"Lord bless your heart!" said Brag, "there's no accounting for females—weathercocks—eh!"

"I cannot comprehend it," said Rushton: "even had—"

"Do you believe it?" said Brag.

"You say it, Mr. Brag," said Rushton;—"it must be so."

"I'll do more," said Jack: "we are both in the same boat, and shall be near connexions."

"Yes," said Rushton, in a tone not expressive of the feelings which the anticipation really excited, "so we shall;—well?"

"Well then," said Jack, "you must keep the secret:—when a female is concerned, a man ought to be as still as a dead horse. I'll show you her own note,—in course, not a word to anybody."

Saying which he took out his pocket-book, and selected with more than ordinary care the widow's favourable billet. Rushton would have seized it, such was his anxiety to convince himself of the truth of his companion's statement, but Jack would not part with it. Rushton saw it was her writing, and read enough to satisfy himself not only that it was a genuine document, but actually the identical letter which he had seen her despatch in the presence of Sir Charles Lydiard and himself—a fact which, however much it might relieve him from all apprehension of Brag's further interference with his proceedings, was in an instant coupled in his mind with the circumstance of Blanche having upon the same occasion also sent off a hateful three-cornered note to somebody else. How subtle are the workings of a jealous mind!—one evil overcome, up starts another: one doubt is removed only to make room for its instant successor.

"You see what she says," said Brag. "What d'ye think of Sir Charles now—eh? *he* hasn't been awake! That, I think, is a finisher for *him*. I shouldn't have shown you this, but I know—I am sure, you thought I was beating about after Blanche—and fancied that *she*—eh?"

"I fancy nothing now," said Rushton—"Blanche is all faith and truth!"—"Umph!" said Brag, dying, but not daring, to show *her* up too.)—"But Mrs. Dallington," continued he—"I well! have often told Lydiard that he was taking it too easy, and too calmly, and all the return I got was his reproach for being too hasty and too *exigeant* in my demands upon the reason and consistency of women in general. I knew what would happen."

"Was that since I became acquainted with her?" said Brag.

"Long before," said Rushton: "and as for Blanche," continued he, still "harping" upon the letter, "mild and amiable as she is, I dare say even *she* deceives me sometimes."

"I shouldn't wonder," said Jack, looking excessively cunning.

"You are comforter to a doubting man," said Rushton.

"Well, good-bye!" said Jack. "In course, you'll take no notice of what I have said. I think we had better have the double marriage the same day—eh! Mrs. Dallington Brag will sound well. I think I shall startle Lord Tom:—so, mum! as I say:—keep my

counsel, and it will all come off smack smooth, right up, straight down, and no mistake!"

Saying which, Brag quitted his wondering companion at the top of Harley Street, to which this dialogue had extended their walk; and darted across the New road to a livery stable, where two or three of his horses, which did *not* belong to him, were standing at livery.

Rushton's feelings were considerably excited by the disclosure which his companion had made. His indignation was roused by the assurance and vanity of the coxcomb, ready to sacrifice the character of a woman who had owned her affection for him, to the gratification of boasting of her good opinion; while his sympathy was seriously awakened for Sir Charles Lydiard. That he had been, as he had long suspected, made the dupe of a heartless woman, was now a fact incontrovertibly established; and Rushton considered it his duty to Sir Charles, for whom, however uncongenial their characters and opposed their dispositions might be, he could not fail to entertain a high respect and esteem, to make him acquainted with what he had heard from Brag,—or rather, which was most convincing, that which he had seen in his possession, in order that he might spare himself the needless mortification of receiving a formal dismissal from the widow, as well as to rescue him from a further continuance of a system of hypocrisy and deception, for which, although it was impossible not to admit it, it was most difficult reasonably to account.

Naturally enough, these considerations upon Sir Charles Lydiard's affair led to some reflections upon his own. Blanche, the gentle and the mild, was the sister of the woman who had conducted herself with such heartless levity and indelicate duplicity—not only her sister, but her constant associate—her confidante, no doubt. The last pert toss of Brag's empty head had its weight in these calculations: it was most unquestionably to be inferred that there was no great difference between the conduct or character of the two sisters. But what was a hint or innuendo from such a person? Nothing!—unless backed up and corroborated by testimony so convincing as that which he had afforded of the widow's levity and fickleness.

Rushton's thoughts, however, still rested on Sir Charles Lydiard. A little more reflection upon the matter strengthened him in his first intention, of imparting all he knew to the worthy baronet—an intention which he more particularly determined to put in practice, inasmuch as a communication between them might elicit something beneficial to both.

Accordingly Rushton proceeded to the hotel at which Sir Charles was living, and found him at home and alone. When he entered the room where he was sitting, he was sensibly struck by an un-

usual embarrassment in his manner, and a kind of affectionate air in his reception of him. Rushton felt assured that he knew the worst. They sat down; but the difficulty which Rushton naturally experienced in opening the subject uppermost in his mind, was increased by the evident agitation of the baronet. A few commonplace observations, and questions about riding, or walking, or dining, were soon exhausted. At length Rushton asked his friend if he should be at Mrs. Dallington's during the day or evening.

"I think I shall go there in the evening," said Sir Charles, and his voice faltered:—a pause ensued.

"Have you heard from either of the ladies this morning?" asked Rushton.

"No," replied Lydiard, looking earnestly at his friend—"have you?"

"Not I," said Rushton—and then came another pause. "What extraordinary creatures women are!"

"They are indeed, Rushton," said Sir Charles. "Pray, have you happened to meet that most odious of persons, Mr. Brag, in the course of your walk or ride to-day?"

"I have," said Rushton, in a tone much more serious than the subject seemed to require, at the same time fixing his eyes steadily upon the unhappy victim before him.

"He is extremely popular with the women," said Sir Charles, "which strikes me as one of the strongest proofs of the impossibility of comprehending the nature of their minds and tastes."

"It does seem curious," said Rushton, "that anything so vain and so vulgar should have the power to induce women of sense, education, rank, and character, to forfeit all claims to respect and esteem by favouring his pretensions."

"Pray, Rushton, did the fellow make any communication to you?" asked Sir Charles.

"Upon what subjects?" said Rushton.

"A very tender and important one," replied the baronet: "indeed, if you had not called, I should have endeavoured to find you before dinner; to have spoken to you upon it."

"Why, he certainly did say something," said Rushton,—“and that something was very important.”

"Did he show you a letter?" said Sir Charles.

"He did," replied Rushton.

"Well, then, we can speak without further disguise," said Sir Charles;—"were you not thunder-stricken?"

"It merely confirmed me in my often repeated opinion,—that we know nothing of women," said Rushton.

"You have often told me you thought there was something of the sort going on between them," said Sir Charles; "but I take matters so much more coolly than you do, that, I confess, it ap-

peared to me little else than the common *badinage* in which a pretty woman dearly loves to engage."

"Ah! Sir Charles," said Rushton, "it is that very coolness of which you boast that has done all the mischief."

"I don't exactly see that," said Sir Charles. "You will find that I shall bring my young widow into perfect subjection, more especially after this adventure of the chattering Brag."

"After!" said Rushton—"Why, my dear Sir Charles, what on earth do you mean? That after the exposure of falsehood and flightiness, delusion and deception, which this fellow has had the good fortune to excite, and has now the vanity to exhibit in the public streets, you would marry Mrs. Dallington, if you could?"

"My dear friend, why not?" said the baronet. "I may, and do, feel deeply for all the results which you enumerate, and agree with you in your surprise that such results should have occurred: it seems perfectly miraculous!—but, however much I may sympathize with you, there can be no reason why I should give up Mrs. Dallington."

"Did you read the letter Brag received?" said Rushton.

"I did," replied Sir Charles, "twice over—and, I assure you, was exceedingly shocked and amazed."

"My dear Sir Charles," exclaimed Rushton, "are you made of ice?—'exceedingly shocked!' is *that* a phrase consistent with the discovery of such a proof of infidelity *as this*?"

"What can I say more, Rushton!" said Sir Charles. "You must feel the blow most severely, especially with your vivid imagination and excessive sensibility; but for *me*, I have only to thank my stars that my fair widow is still my own."

"Your own!" cried Rushton:—"what! after she has accepted Brag!"

"*She* accept Brag!" said the baronet, opening his eyes rather wider than usual—"no, no—that would be rather too much of a joke!"

"Why, she *has* accepted him!" said Rushton, dashing his hand on the table.

"In your circumstances, Frank," said Sir Charles, "one would not venture to suspect a joke:—but, whatever may have been the indiscretions of the meek and modest Miss Englefield, Mrs. Dallington has, I flatter myself, too much good sense to be betrayed into any such absurdity."

"Why, you told me you had seen the letter," said Rushton.

"So I have," replied Sir Charles, "but most assuredly no letter of her's."

"Whose then?" exclaimed Frank.

"Why," said Sir Charles, "Blanche's letter."

"Letter to whom?" cried Rushton, starting from his chair.

"To her accepted lover, Brag," replied the baronet.

"*Her* lover!" cried, or rather screamed, the infuriate Rushton. "My dear friend, what do you mean?—what does it all mean?"

"I mean merely," replied Sir Charles, "that Mr. Brag was good enough to show me the letter in question, which was written to him by Miss Blanche Englefield, accepting the offer of his hand,—and that I read it twice over."

"Why, then, the world's at an end, Lydiard!" cried Rushton. "Blanche false!—Blanche!—Oh! why was I deceived?—why was I duped?"

"I really don't know," said Sir Charles, in a tone which, by the contrast it afforded to the convulsive exclamations of his agitated friend, seemed to imply that he did not very much care.

"But how do *you* bear it, Sir Charles?" said Rushton. "These women are worse than women usually are. He showed me a letter from the widow,—your widow! Sir Charles,—couched in exactly the same terms."

"What!—accepting him?" said Sir Charles.

"Upon my honour and life! yes," said Rushton. "What on earth does it mean? That dear, calm, mild—I shall go mad—raving mad!—Wretch that I am!"

"Stop, Rushton," said Sir Charles; "follow my advice; sit down, and take rest and comfort."

"Comfort!"

"Yes, comfort," said the baronet. "I see through all this in a moment. While there was but one letter, and one traitress, it was all possible, though not probable; the two settle the affair:—it's a trick."

"A trick! my dear Sir Charles," said Rushton—"no, no! To think that that fair creature should so far forget herself—no, no:—I am sure she never could have written—"

"My dear friend, I saw and read the letter," said Sir Charles, "and I repeat it is all a trick. How could two women, living on the terms upon which Blanche and her sister live, accept the same man in one day? No doubt, this wretched little creature has been persecuting them with his attentions, and they have undertaken this scheme as the precursor of his unceremonious rejection."

"But why write?" said Rushton—"why—"

"For the better carrying on of the plot," continued the baronet:—"you trust their letters—I, their hearts. That very empty coxcombs may, and do, succeed sometimes, is too notorious to be denied; but here the case is totally different, in my opinion. The fat knight, in the hands of the Windsor wives, was in a more enviable position than our little steeple-hunter is at this moment in those of one maid and widow."

"Do you really think so?" said Rushton, his rage moderating a little.

"Think!" replied Sir Charles—"consult your own common sense; a moment's reflection proves it."

"Upon my life! I begin to think so too," said Rushton. "But there is one thing which seems to me absolutely necessary, not only to assure us of their good intentions, but to vindicate our own characters and worry them in their turn,—I mean, that whether these notes are or are not intended to entrap and expose Mr. Brag, we should consider them serious, and act upon the information we have received from their adorable imp."

"I shall go to Mrs. Dallington's," said Sir Charles, "this evening, as usual, see how things look, and proceed accordingly."

"Yes, but don't let us believe everything we hear too readily," said Frank.

"What! still jealous—still doubting?" said the baronet.

"No, not that,"—said Rushton, "I will be there too; and while you touch upon the subject, I will watch their eyes."

"The telegraphs again," said Sir Charles.

"Yes, there one may read the language of the heart," said Rushton.

"Leave the management of the affair to me," said Sir Charles: "I can conduct myself more calmly and moderately than some people. Rely upon it, my widow shall not get out of this little manœuvre without some trouble."

"You will not distress her?" said Rushton.

"A woman in tears looks remarkably interesting," said the baronet.

"I love to see her dear countenance drest in smiles," said Rushton, "and I do hope you—"

"We will go this evening together," said the baronet. "See how I conduct myself towards Mrs. Dallington, and if you do not choose to follow my example, at least profit by experience."

"I confess," said Rushton, "I am by no means satisfied; yet all you say—"

"Is all that is to be said on the subject," said Sir Charles. "So now I am at your service for a walk or ride till dressing-time, and, if you have nothing better to do afterwards, for a *tête-à-tête* cutlet at Crocky's; we can there talk over our future proceedings for the evening, and suggest some method of utterly exterminating John Brag, Esq."

"Kicking him first, and shooting him afterwards," said Rushton, "is what I should respectfully recommend."

"Oh! dear no," said Sir Charles, "most assuredly neither the one nor the other; he shall live to amuse us upon some other

occasion : without a few tigers and lions, society would be 'flat, stale, and unprofitable.' So, come away, and, I flatter myself, you will see me this evening at Mr. Dallington's in something very like a new character."

It was under this engagement the friends proceeded on their stroll, Rushton feeling infinitely less at ease than the baronet, who viewed the affair in its true light, and was fully resolved upon having his *revanche* after his own plan.

What the state of Brag's feelings might have been during the few hours which preceded the deciding visit to the same scene, it is scarcely possible to imagine. Mr. Ducrow can ride two; or even three, horses at once; and some other equally astounding artist is able to dance upon two tight ropes at the same time; but to manage two ladies under the circumstances in which Brag had placed himself, seems to be a task Herculean by comparison with either of the others. A man less conceited and self-assured would either have seen through the trick which they had so justly played upon him, or if he could have imagined the result possible, would have excused himself from accepting the invitation of either lady, when both were for the same night; but Jack took it for granted that he had, as he called it, "knocked them both over," and that, as the "females" were "cunning creturs," each one would so contrive to play her own game, as not to awaken the suspicions of the other.

As the time approached, Johnny made the most careful preparations for dressing. Never was anything so smart and spruce as the dapper cockney in what he called his "genteel comedy" dress; and by nine o'clock he was all ready for the conflict. Circumstances, however, as we shall see, conspired to delay his appearance at the widow's, and Sir Charles and Rushton arrived before him. It was judged, however, better, for the furtherance of their scheme, that Rushton should not make his appearance in the drawing-room at the same time with his friend; he therefore made an excuse to the servant, that he wished to write a letter before he went up stairs, and bade him put lights in the library in order that he might do so. Sir Charles proceeded to the drawing-room at once, and found the ladies alone, evidently waiting the arrival of Brag, whose exhibition was not intended by them to have been witnessed by anybody but themselves. Their surprise at the appearance of Sir Charles was, however, speedily changed into a feeling of a very different nature, by finding him colder, more gloomy, and more reserved than even he was usually.

("Rely upon it," said Mrs. Dallington to her sister, "Mr. Brag has been blabbing.")—"My dear Sir Charles, you seem vastly out of spirits."

"There are circumstances in the world which affect us to such a degree, madam," said Lydiard, "as to render a concealment of the feelings they excite impossible."

"To what do you allude, Sir Charles?" said Mrs. Dallington, really concerned at perceiving what she could not doubt to be the successful result of her manœuvre.

"I mean, madam," said Lydiard, "that a woman who permits the unequivocal attentions of a lover—encourages those attentions—nay, goes the length of admitting her affection for him, and then betrays him and accepts a rival, strikes a blow to his heart, the anguish of which cannot be disguised."

"Rely upon it," said Mrs. Dallington, "you have no cause for the grief you describe."

"I! madam," said the baronet,—"I am not speaking of myself: no, no—*my* sorrow and anxiety are excited by a sympathy for my poor friend, Rushton. Oh! Miss Englefield, what must your feelings be when you know the state of mind to which he is reduced? He has discovered all. He is aware of the transfer of your affections, and is, as I verily believe—mad!"

"Mad!" said Blanche.

"Yes," said Sir Charles; "his feelings, as you well know, are strong—his passions violent. His conduct this afternoon I consider very little short of insanity."

"Under similar circumstances, Sir Charles," said Mrs. Dallington, "you perhaps would not be so violently affected."

"Certainly not, madam," replied Sir Charles; "but I can feel deeply for a friend who is. To *my* advice only will he be indebted for a speedy restoration, as I hope, from his alarming state. I have found the means, and I rejoice to know that he has adopted them."

"What may they be, Sir Charles?" said Blanche, her eyes filling with tears.

"Very simple, and, in my opinion, not particularly disagreeable," said Sir Charles. "There is a certain Miss Harrington, a most amiable, beautiful girl, who is awowedly in love with him,—Julia Harrington, I think, she is called."

"Y-es," stammered Blanche, "I—know—I have seen her—"

"Well," said the baronet, "after what he had communicated to me of your conduct, it appeared to me, that as you had thought proper to reject him in a way so decided as by accepting another gentleman, which—forgive me, if I am wrong—he told me you had done, it was the most judicious thing in the world for him to transfer his affections to the young lady of whose compassion he was perfectly secure, and for whom, I happen to know, he entertains a very high regard, to call it by no other or tenderer name.

"And," said Blanche, "did he take your advice, and fly to her at your suggestion?"

"Not exactly," said Sir Charles; "I had to drive him to her father's house in my cab; and although he certainly resisted at first, I eventually succeeded in settling him into an invitation to a family dinner with them, where, I conclude, he is now sipping his claret, and making himself acceptable to the fair daughter of the house."

"What on earth shall I do!" said Blanche to herself:—but her ejaculation was not so completely "mental" as to escape the attentive ears of the worthy baronet, who felt his own character change, and his disposition alter, as he witnessed the gradual success of his stratagem.

"I think, Sir Charles," said Mrs. Dallington, who was now convinced that *her* proceedings with Brag were yet unknown to him, "that you might have spent the last few hours of your life more profitably than in separating two fond hearts."

"Fond hearts!" said Sir Charles—"the acceptance of a rival is no particularly strong proof of fondness. No—let him marry where he is loved; and as for myself, Mrs. Dallington, I shall content myself with waiting a little longer for the happiness which, I trust, my friend will shortly enjoy. I hope, madam, some day to find, like Rushton, a woman who will condescend to love me truly and faithfully. My pretensions, I own, are inconsiderable; but I have at least the merit of sincerity and honesty. I admit that these are not such striking qualifications as those of Mr. Brag, a preference for whom I am aware you have exhibited, and upon which I have the honour to congratulate both you and myself. I wish you a very good evening, ladies."

Saying which, Sir Charles walked out of the room, leaving Mrs. Dallington and Miss Englefield in a state of stupor and amazement. That Brag should be laughed at by them, and made the subject of a scene which should in the end prove to their lovers the utter contempt they had for the pretender of whom those lovers were both jealous, was as the reader knows, the main object of their scheme; but the mean opinion even *they* entertained of the man—if man he may be called—did not induce them to suspect the possibility of his exhibiting their two letters to his rivals.

Their own agitation, and the manner Sir Charles assumed during the conversation, gave them no opportunity of explaining away the affair, and they sat looking at each other for two or three minutes without speaking, convinced that the anger of Sir Charles was genuine, and the story he had told true; for although it was part of their object, or at least of Mrs. Dallington's, to agitate the feelings of their devoted swains, it was most assuredly not their intention either to drive Sir Charles into old bachelorism, or hurry Rushton into a marriage with Miss Harrington.

"Well," said Mrs. Dallington, "this has somehow taken a wrong turn. I admit that Sir Charles's agitation pleases me; it is

what I hoped for!—although certainly I did not think that Mr. Brag was quite so great a monster:—but for *you*, Blanche—”

“I am lost,” said Blanche, “for ever! Oh, sister, sister!—why did I lend myself to this scheme? If Rushton marries that Miss Harrington, what on earth will become of me?”

“There it is, Blanche,” said Mrs. Dallington; “while you had him all to yourself, you never were at rest,—always quarrelling, always reproaching, always accusing and defending.”

“True,” said Miss Englefield, “but what are such quarrels? I know his heart—I know his good qualities—I can see his imperfections;—but that I love him sincerely is now my greatest misfortune.”

Little did Miss Blanche Englefield think that this most unequivocal declaration of the state of her heart and feeling was clearly and distinctly heard by Mr. Francis Rushton himself, who having, instead of dining at General Harrington’s, as Sir Charles had stated, entered the boudoir, in which there was no light, from the staircase, at the moment that his friend was giving his account of the proceedings of the morning, and not venturing to interrupt the thread of a narrative which was to form so important a feature of *their* scheme, had dropped himself quietly into a well-stuffed chair in a corner of the room, where he lay *perdu*, not daring then to make his appearance, which would, of course, overthrow the authenticity of Sir Charles’s story; and afterwards being ashamed of admitting, by presenting himself to the ladies, when the worthy baronet was gone, that he had, under such circumstances, overheard the declaration which had given him such unqualified delight.

“Well,” said Mrs. Dallington, “of one thing it assures us, at all events, that however the warmth of the one and the coldness of the other may at times have excited our suspicions of fidelity in one instance, or affection in the other, it is now clearly established that they are both sincerely attached to us.”

“And what consolation is that to *me*?” said Blanche—“or how can I ever atone to myself for having, at your suggestion, answered the impertinent note of that odious, foolish creature, Brag? What must Frank think of me?—to prefer such an animal to *him*!”

“Well, but surely, Blanche,” said Mrs. Dallington, “Rushton’s devotion to *you* cannot have been so entirely exclusive. I have heard him vowing that he would die if you rejected him; instead of which, he immediately sets about making another match the moment he thinks you have cast him off. If he had chosen to kill himself, you could not help it, you know.”

“Oh! sister, sister,” said Blanche, “do not for the world talk of such a thing:—Rushton kill himself for *me*!”

"Yes: it was his course of proceeding," said Mrs. Dallington, "to agitate, excite, and alarm you into loving him. Sir Charles's line with me has been totally different. It is our duty to ourselves to conceal our feelings now, however strong they may be; our honour demands the sacrifice."

"Honour! my dear sister," said Blanche,— "honour consists in deceiving no one. As for Rushton, you would at this moment be delighted to find Sir Charles as jealous of *you* as you have often seen *him* jealous of *me*. Miss Harrington has long been attached to him, and now by this silly scheme, as I must call it, I have driven him to return that affection. If he could know the anguish I feel at this moment, he would best know how to appreciate my regard and esteem."

The tears that followed these words were more than Rushton could bear. His apparent meanness in listening—the certain overthrow of Sir Charles's scheme—every consideration but one was forgotten; and starting from his corner, he rushed into the drawing-room, and in an instant was on his knees before his beloved Blanche.

"I am here!" said Rushton,— "is this enough?"

"Mercy on me!—Mr. Rushton!" cried Blanche.

"What!" said Frank, "did you—could you for a moment believe that I should act as Lydiard has told you I had done? No, no, Blanche! I am at your feet—your slave eternal: my heart—my hand—my fate, are all at your disposal."

"So," said Mrs. Dallington, "Sir Charles Lydiard is the wise manager of this scheme."

"Yes," said Rushton, "he saw through the trick you were playing, which I was mad enough to believe a matter-of-fact."

"And how might *you* have become acquainted with the story?" asked Mrs. Dallington.

"Your double victim," said Rushton, "was so elated by his success, that, in order to relieve Lydiard's weak mind, he showed *him* Blanche's tender billet; and in order to prove what a dupe Lydiard was, he exhibited yours to *me*."

"Was there ever such a detestable wretch upon earth!" said Mrs. Dallington.

"You know he is coming here this evening," said Rushton.

"He shall not be let in," said Mrs. Dallington.

"Oh! yes, by all means let him in," said Rushton. "All care is now banished from our hearts; let us celebrate the happy termination of all our uncertainties by a sacrifice."

"As you like," said the fair widow. "And where is Sir Charles?—is he gone?"

"Not he," said Rushton: "he is in the library, I take it. His

scheme is not yet half complete, but he may now spare himself the trouble of working it out."

"I may indeed," said the worthy baronet, entering the drawing-room through the boudoir, where he hoped to have found Rushton still ensconced, and the mystification still in progress.

"They know all," said Rushton.

"As I did before," said Sir Charles. "I was perfectly aware of the character of their proceedings towards our formidable rival, but I am equally satisfied with yourself that we deserved such a return for our doubts of those we so dearly prize. I admit that I have been jealous, from an excess of esteem; Frank has been jealous from an excess of love. It is time to terminate these little bickerings; and if my dear Mrs. Dallington will be content with such a heart as I have to offer, it is hers, entire and undivided."

"This is a very extraordinary proceeding," said Mrs. Dallington. "I am taken entirely by surprise; however, Sir Charles, I know of no great advantage in concealing a generous feeling of attachment which I admit to exist—and so—we will consider of it to-morrow."

"My dear sister," said Blanche, "I began to be very angry with you at one time."

"When you thought you should lose Rushton," said Mrs. Dallington. "but I never was much agitated, because I did not give that implicit credit to Sir Charles's history of Julia Harrington, which you, who were so much more interested, and therefore so much less able to form a just opinion upon it, did; and I was at all events satisfied, that if your devoted had, in the course of two hours, made up his mind to a new *affaire de cœur*, his *cœur* was not much worth caring for."

"Well," said Sir Charles, "I confess myself happier than I have been for these two years."

At that moment, it being about half-past ten o'clock, the drawing-room door was thrown open, and—"Mr. Brag!" announced. The effect produced was infinitely greater than the hero of the night himself imagined. The cause of his being so late was this;—he had anticipated that the "females," each manœuvring in her own behalf, would not only have contrived to find opportunities for separate *têtes-à-têtes*, but that this widow, who, of course, had the control, would so have arranged that there should be no visitors to interrupt them. When he first reached the house, he found Sir Charles Lydiard's carriage at the door. This annoyed him considerably, and he retired for more than an hour, thinking that the "bore" of a baronet might have dined with his intended, and that he would go early. Upon his return at the latest possible period at which he felt he could with propriety seek admission into so regular a family as Mrs. Dallington's, there he still found the

eternal carriage of Sir Charles Lydiard. In order to show the earnestness of his feelings, he resolved to pay his visit, however inconvenient the presence of other company might be. He grasped the knocker: the thunder resounded through the hall. The door was opened; and after the purgatorial process of mounting the stairs,—there he stood, in the middle of the circle,—“as large,” or perhaps we had better say as small, “as life!”

It is difficult to describe the various sensations created by his appearance—the indignation of the women, or the sovereign contempt of the men, increased tenfold by his vain, dirty, and unprincipled exhibition of the letters. However, although there had been no time for preconcerting any course of behaviour towards him, it seemed simultaneously to strike the two happy couples, to treat him in that sort of easy, commonplace manner, which might leave him without the slightest suspicion that the whole of the affair was known or understood, and so give him scope for a little of that admirable management with which he used to boast he “carried on the war,” and to which, it was evident, he must resort, to maintain his position relatively to his two captives.

“You are late, Mr. Brag,” said Rushton.

“Yes,” said Brag, “I have been dining with some monsters who sit and drink wine. Upon my life! we had to swallow four or five bottles after dinner, before coffee was ordered:—that I call a bore, and no mistake.”

The time to which this description referred had been expended by this exemplary man in walking up and down and round about the neighbouring streets, until he should see the departure of the baronet's carriage. Little did he imagine what had occurred in that very drawing-room during the period of his peregrinations.

“I ought to apologize to *you*,” said Brag, addressing himself to the widow, with a look which the other three perfectly understood;—“but Lord Tom had two or three young fellows to dine with him—wanted me to do the honours and be *crowpee*; so I couldn't say no,—for Tommy is a right good fellow, and no mistake, although *some people* don't patronize him.”

“I *thought* Lord Tom, as you call him,” said Sir Charles, “was at Dover.”

“Came to town this afternoon, and goes back to-morrow,” said Jack, not in the slightest degree abashed or confounded.

Sir Charles whispered something to Mrs. Dallington, which seemed very much to impugn the truth of Jack's statement; during which little *entretien*, Jack drew his chair close to Blanche's, and with a look which nearly destroyed the serenity of the rest of the party, said, in a low tone, “I was determined to be here this evening, let what might happen.”

"I appreciate your kindness and consideration," said Miss Englefield.

"I was thinking," said Brag, in that sort of confidential whisper in which all the branches of the Brag family speak nothingnesses to handsome women, in hopes that they may be mistaken for somethings, "that you are too hard upon Rushton. What you say in your note is too severe: give him a trial. There's no accounting for temper. I had a cover hack once,—as pretty an animal as ever stepped,—but his temper was unaccountable bad. Instead of flogging or pulling him, I bore with him, and humoured him,—tried him with a snaffle instead of a curb,—and at last he went as quiet as a lamb."

"What!" said Blanche, assuming the same tone,—“you recommend patience, and advise forbearance!—I scarcely expected this.”

"Upon my honour!" said Jack, "you know I *can* mean nothing but what's right up, straight down, and no mistake. I like Rushton very much, and, I must say, I do think you don't give him a fair chance. I mean, if that's the cause of your separating—"

"What," said Rushton, "are you talking about me?"

"Nothing you need mind hearing," said Brag. "You," continued he, rising from his seat, and leaning over Rushton's chair—"you are not like our poor friend the baronet in the next room—he, he, he!—eh?"

"No," said Rushton; "he seems entirely devoted."

"Strange blindness!" said Jack. "But, I say, Rushton,—now that Blanche is gone to join them,—upon my life, I cannot help congratulating you upon that. She is charming; so mild—so gentle—eh! Do *that* off-hand—take my advice—hit the nail on the head—strike while the iron's hot: settle—sign—seal—eh!—black and white, and no mistake."

"I think I shall," said Rushton.

"Blanche, dear," said Mrs. Dallington, "if you have any voice, sing us one of those little things of Rossini's."

"Voice!" said Blanche,—“I have neither voice nor inclination to sing.”

"Do!" said Brag, taking her hand affectionately—"delight me! To-morrow I will explain all I said just now."

Blanche turned from him with a shudder, which he mistook for a mark of sensitive affection, and proceeded to the piano-forte, to which, much to her delight, Brag saw Rushton accompany her. It was evident to the conspirators that Brag attributed Mrs. Dallington's proposition for singing to a desire for a few minutes' conversation with *him*, because he knew enough of society to know that a young lady's song is the signal of the general untying

of tongues ; and that people who have been all the evening sitting as silent as the grave, immediately begin to talk and flirt the moment the music begins. To favour Brag's too palpable design, Sir Charles left Mrs. Dallington's side to make way for the pretender, and joined the happy couple at the piano-forte.

The bait was swallowed—the baronet's vacated place was instantly occupied, and Brag as close as he could be to Mrs. Dallington in a moment. The symphony was luckily long and loud.

"How shall I thank you enough," said Brag, "for your note? It settles my fate:—all done, snug and comfortable. I *could* tell you such a story!—but mum for the present. How you *can* go on with that most worthy Sir Charles! upon my life you are too bad;—he believes that you are desperately in love with him at this minute—that I know;—and I know more,—that he is desperately in love with *you* : however, he may stay or go, now, just as he pleases. My dear Mrs. Dallington, you have bound me in eternal gratitude:—all will go well—and, by Heavens! I swear—"

"Sir Charles, Sir Charles!" said Mrs. Dallington, "do leave those players and singers alone. Mr. Brag is getting so dreadfully tender, that I don't know what upon earth to do with him. I must have you, if you please, to break the particularity of a *tête-à-tête*, and to play propriety in that corner."

"The devil!" said Brag, in more than a whisper—"what the deuce are you about?"

"What! is our friend getting particularly animated?" said the baronet.

"Not particularly, Sir Charles," said Brag; "I was merely saying *that*, which, under the circumstances, is mere matter of business, as I conceive. I may be wrong—but I like candour and openness nevertheless, and no mistake."

This sentiment, expressed in the loudest tone of voice, reached the fair syren and her swain; the lady ceased playing, and the pair burst out into a violent fit of laughing.

"Well," said Brag, who began to get uncommonly angry, "that's civil, considering how things stand at present."

This remark threw Mrs. Dallington and Sir Charles into an equally powerful convulsion of mirth with that of the other couple.

"I can't help laughing at *you*, Lydiard," said Rushton.

"Nor I at *you*, Rushton," said the baronet.

"Well, it is all very good fun, I dare say," said Brag, "but, for *my* part, I see no joke in your laughing at each other : there's not much to laugh about in any of it, if you come to that."

Here the four members of the party all laughed ten times louder than before.

"I am not aware," said Brag, "what you are all so very merry about."

"Why, Mr. Brag," said Blanche, with one of her sweetest looks, "we are all laughing at you!"

"At ME!" said Brag.

"Yes, Mr. Brag," said the widow;—"when gentlemen choose to write duplicate love letters to two sisters, and then show their answers to the two gentlemen to whom these ladies are engaged, don't you think the affair, when discovered, becomes rather ridiculous?"

The laugh which followed this question was so loud, that the voice of the servant, who announced supper,—a light and social meal to which the agreeable widow was strongly addicted, and to which her favourite guests were always specially invited,—could scarcely be heard.

"What!" said Brag, "have you been hoaxing me? Why, this is too bad!"

"Not at all, Mr. Brag," said the lady of the house. "Had the conduct of either my sister or myself been such as to encourage your pretensions, we might have excused your addressing either of us; but when you undertake to make two proposals at once, the pity we might have been inclined to feel for your blindness is turned into a sentiment which, as supper is waiting, I will not stop to describe. Come, Sir Charles, give me your arm; Mr. Rushton, take care of Blanche. We are going to supper, Mr. Brag. Good evening!"

"Good evening, Mr. Brag!" said Blanche, making a low courtesy to the astounded little man.

"Good night, Mr. Brag!" said Sir Charles, bowing formally.

"Brag, good night!" said Rushton, nodding to him familiarly; and the happy quartette went laughing down stairs to their symposium, leaving Mr. John Brag as cold as ice and as white as a sheet, standing on the heart-rug with his back to the fire-place, transfixed, as it were, to the spot. The world was at an end! His eyes rested upon the marquetry and the buhl, and the ebony and the ivory, and the Sèvres and the Dresden, and the large looking-glasses, and the Louis-Quatorze tables,—all of which he had, half an hour before, considered his own goods and chattels; and there he would have stood till "morning's dawn," had not one of the footmen, more considerate than the rest, gone up to him and asked him if he should call a cab for him, for that it had set in a very wet night.

It was all too true!—this appeal awakened him from his dream. He declined the offer, took his hat, and descended the staircase to the hall; passed the door of the library where the supper had been served; heard the clatter of plates, and the peals of mirth which were doubtless ringing at his cost, and stepped from the door of his lost paradise into a thick mizzling rain with a

sharp wind, which drifted right into his blanched face, saturated his thin shoes, and made him as bodily miserable as he was mentally unhappy.

CHAPTER XI.

AFTER this most disagreeable ejection, the character of which might be well expressed in the words which Mr. Kane O'Hara has put into the mouth of the kicked-out-of-Heaven Apollo, who calls his expulsion from the higher regions and his fall to earth, "a pretty decent tumble!" it may naturally be supposed that our sprightly friend, Jack, was rather out of sorts. As he baffled the wind which drove the sharp rain peppering into his eyes, new lights seemed to burst upon him; and in recalling to mind the whole course of his proceedings with the ladies, "trifles light as air," came one after the other to his recollection, which, coolly and calmly combined, tended to exhibit himself to himself in anything but a favourable point of view.

He began all at once to perceive that the lovers as well as the ladies had all along been playing upon him; and the idea that both of them should have accepted him seemed, in the midst of the soaking shower, an absurdity only to be equalled by his having himself made the double proposal. In fact, it is quite curious, as a matter of natural history to consider the extraordinary effects produced upon the pretender by the wretchedness of his present position; and one might have hoped that such an exposure, and such a degradation, would have cured his affectation and pretension for ever:—but no. As soon as the next day dawned and the sun again shone, Jack's despondency was at an end, and his natural disposition, for bouncing rather sharpened than checked by the desire he now felt of showing how little he cared for his late disaster, and how much better he could do for himself now that he was freed from his self-imposed fetters.

It nevertheless suggested itself to him, that it would be wiser and more prudent to choose another sphere of action; for, besides having a better chance of success, it would remove him for the present from the town which held the ladies and their lovers, with all or any of whom he felt a meeting for the next few weeks would be extremely disagreeable.

In casting about for a retreat, he recollected that Lord Tom, as Sir Charles had truly said, was staying at Dover; and as that circumstance would secure him a friend, and probably some introduction into society there, he determined upon following his noble friend thither forthwith; and therefore upon his often-tried principle of figuring in print amongst the great and gay, he caused his

portmanteau and bag to be deposited at a hotel in the vicinity of his town "plate," at which he slept that night, and at the door of which the Branch Coach of the Dover Union, would call for him the next morning, and convey him to the Bricklayers' Arms, with the certainty that he would, on the second day after his arrival on the coast, find amongst the "fashionable departures" in the fashionable London newspapers, the words—"Mr. Brag, from Pumpkin's Hotel, for Dover." It would have been easier to have slept at his lodgings at Kennington, and hired somebody to carry his baggage from his "little place in Surrey" to the Kent Road—but no:—then he must have been at the expense of paying for the announcement of his own removal, whereas by his present arrangement he got *that* gratis, and flourished at the hotel for a few hours for less money than the insertions would have cost him, had he adopted the other means.

At one time, soon after his father's death, Jack made an attempt at popularity amongst the sicklies at Cheltenham, and contributed to one or two public charities, and two or three private subscriptions for distressed objects. Upon these occasions he regularly transmitted his donation to the printer of the newspaper, with directions to deduct the charge of inserting his name and liberality in the columns of his "widely circulated" journal, and hand the balance of whatever he enclosed to the charity:—for instance, one pound for the subscription, and five-and-twenty shillings for advertising his benevolence three times.

This ostentatious virtue has a parallel in an anecdote recorded, falsely or correctly, I know not which, of a late celebrated dissenting preacher, who, upon the occasion of visiting a family reduced to a dreadful state of poverty, found the father of four or five starving children shirtless in bed; his necessities having driven him to sell his last remaining garment. A sight like this, could not fail to move so exemplary a man: he desired the children to quit the room, and forthwith divested himself of the shirt he himself wore, to "cover the nakedness" of the emaciated sufferer. This being done, the children were called back, and bid by their parent to go on their knees to the pious minister, who had deprived himself of his own garment to comfort their father. They did so: they wept for gratitude, and they did more all four of them went,—one east, one west, one south, and one north,—and proclaimed the excellence of the pastor; and when he quitted the house which he had adorned by his presence, women, standing at their doors, bent lowly before him, and pointed him out to the babes in their arms, whom he blessed; and when their husbands come home from work the story was told, and repeated, until at length it reached the "public," who joined in the praise and admiration, which soon became general. What would they have said

or thought if they had known that this saintly person, who had won all their love and gratitude, had, in order to produce the desired effect, put on, before he left home, the particular shirt which he thus sacrificed *over the one that he actually wore!*

It might be thought an ill compliment to one of the parties, to make a comparison between this departed worthy and Jack Brag; but if the history be a true one, there is not much to choose between them. Jack—however found, that with all his much-spoken-of benevolence, he could gain no solid advantage by conciliating the affection of a maiden lady, whose fortune he knew to be considerable, and who was of a most charitable turn of mind, and he therefore quitted Cheltenham nearly as much discomfited as he now found himself on his departure from London—only the retirement in that case had been altogether voluntary. In his last failure his exit was far less qualified, and, in truth, he felt very much like the gentleman who in ancient verse says—

“ Perhaps it was right to dissemble her love ;
But why did she kick me down stairs ? ”

The journey to Dover is not one which requires much space for detail, although scarcely a road out of London affords more striking evidence of the wealth and importance of the British metropolis. The frequent glimpses of the majestic Thames, bearing on his ample breast a daily fleet of countless vessels, and which especially strike the foreign traveller just on leaving Milton, where the expansive reach of the Upper Hope first catches the eye,—are full of beauty and interest. The verdant fields and “ hedge-rows green,” with the hop-gardens in full bloom, clustering even more gracefully than the boasted vine, afford a delightful contrast to the wide waste of *la belle France*, which, perhaps, one has just left; while, as far as comforts go, the inns at Rochester, Sittingbourne, and Canterbury, afford all that can be desired, at least to those who can afford to desire them.

Amongst the mutations of fashion, few appear to be so reasonable as that by which Dover (the “ *Clavis et repagulum totius regni*,” as Matthew Paris calls it) has become a place of favourite resort for the best society. It combines a great variety of attractions, and, as long as England continues at peace with France, the daily intercourse between the two countries produces a constant activity, and a change of visitors every twenty-four hours, for the enlivenment and amusement of those who take up their residence in it for the season.

“ No promontory, town, or haven, in Christendom is so placed by nature and situation, both to gratify friends and annoy enemies, as this town of Dover. No place is so settled to receive and deliver intelligence for all matters and actions in Europe from time to time ;

no town is by nature so settled either to allure intercourse by sea, or to train inhabitants by land, to make it great, rich, fair, and populous; nor is there in the whole circuit of this famous isle, any port, either in respect of security or defence, or of traffic or intercourse, more convenient, needful, or rather of necessity to be regarded, than this of Dover."

So sayeth Sir Walter Raleigh, in his memorial to Queen Elizabeth; and if that much-injured worthy were alive to see his favourite town at this period, he would be quite satisfied that his successors in this transitory world have ably worked out his principle. The people of the present day are assiduously continuing their improvements under the sanction of the illustrious Lord-Warden. Nor are the improvements in the port and harbour the only testimonies of its flourishing condition; squares, gardens, streets, rows, crescents, parades, esplanades, and terraces, are rising from the beach, and form a delightful contrast to the business-like appearance of the thickly-thronged pier, and the London-like gaiety of Snargate, with all the attractions of Muddle's and Mummery's.

In this agreeable *locale* was John Brag, Esq. deposited at a quarter before seven o'clock; and having caused himself to be set down at the corner of a lane leading up to one of the best houses in the place, he called a little boy with a ragged jacket and well-tarred trousers, to carry his portmanteau and bag to one of the smallest hostelrys in the town, which stands in Church Street, and rejoices in the sign of "The Three Mackerels," at which "hotel" Brag proposed to occupy an apartment at the very top of the house,—for the benefit of the air.

The first desideratum in mechanics is the production of the greatest possible power in the smallest possible space; and the attainment of this advantage, in a moral point of view, was the ever-present object of Jack's ambition; that is to say, to make as much show as possible at the least possible expense:—for Jack, in the outset of his feverish efforts at settling himself in good society, had disbursed so largely, that it had become a matter of prudence, if not of necessity, to "shave close." Several of his greatest friends were his largest debtors; and Lord Tom Towzle, as has been before hinted, had not unfrequently availed himself of Jack's anxiety to oblige. Having, in two or three instances, discovered that either the well was dry, or that the pump would not work, his lordship had latterly given up soliciting the aid of his lively acquaintance, but at the same time had evinced less desire for the advantages of his agreeable society. Jack, however, who was one of the regular cur tribe, who sneak back to the vulgar great upon the "cut and come again" principle, resolved, if he could not get his principal out of the penniless lordling, to take his interest in the way of in-

troductions to good company; and so, like Sinbad's old man, he took the earliest opportunity of mounting his lordship the next morning.

After a night, not blest with the most soothing dreams, Jack rose from his bed, dressed, and descended from his eyrie, resolved to find Lord Tom in time for his morning meal; and having discovered a back entrance to the alehouse in which he had stowed himself away, he proceeded by that route to the "Ship inn," where, he guessed—and, as it turned out, correctly—his noble friend was staying:—and there, as he proposed, surprised, not altogether agreeably, his noble friend in the act of sitting down to breakfast.

"Why, Brag," said his lordship, "what the deuce has brought you here? Where's the widow? Has Lydiard shot himself?—or have you shot him, and bolted?"

"None of it," said Brag:—"no—that game's up:—cut the connexion altogether, smack, smooth, and no mistake. Lydiard may have her—win her and wear her for his pains. Rather too cunning for me—can't bear forwardness—eh!—you take. I value nothing that does not require some hunting after."

"What!—then you have abandoned her," said Lord Tom; "left her mourning!—hard-hearted Jack!

'Sick with desire, and seeking him she loves,
From street to street the raving Dido roves.
So when the watchful shepherd from the blind,
Wounds, with a random shaft, the careless hind,
Distracted with her pain, she flies the woods,
Bounds o'er the lawn, and seeks the silent floods
With fruitless care; for still the fatal dart
Sticks in her side, and rankles at her heart.'

"There it must stick," said Jack—"that's all I know. I'm off there:—I have seen enough of that house and its inhabitants:—old birds are not caught with chaff—eh! No, no—I know enough of the females to take care of myself."

"Come," said Lord Tom, "sit down, and eat: my notion is, that starving is good for no complaint. Keep your heart up by keeping your stomach full; so, now

'Rebellion's dead and let us go to breakfast.'

Brag needed no more pressing invitation to do ample justice to the substantial repast which was placed before him; and his exertions in the way of replenishing afforded very satisfactory evidence that he was not pining for the loss of his "lady-love," and that his indifference was genuine and sincere.

"All the world here," said Lord Tom—"not a house to be had—people you know by dozens. How long do you stay?"

"Never pin myself to time," said Jack—"as long as I find it

pleasant. Have about fifteen invitations to different places in the country:—can't cut myself into bits—go to as many as I can. This fish is uncommon good—eh!—fresh out of the water, and no mistake."

"How's your mother, Jack?" said Lord Tom.

"Can't say," said Jack; "haven't seen her since the 'Bridge' day."

"Then you don't know whether she has forgiven you?" said his lordship.

"Oh! she's like me," said Brag, "she don't bear malice. I dare say it's all right, up, and straight down, and no mistake, by this time. Talking of that,—are there any likely females for a matrimonial concern here?"

"Why," said his lordship, "I have been here so short a time, that I can't present you with a list; but in the afternoon the band will play on the Parade, and we'll go and see the turn-out. You still stick to the marrying line?"

"Yes," said Jack, "when I can see one to suit. I'll have another cup of tea, my lord," continued he. "I say—talking of suiting—just look there—of course tiled, as I say:—read *that*, and then, I think, you won't wonder at my cutting the widow."

Saying which, the generous gentleman, the *kicker* of the family, tossed the accepting letter of Mrs. Dallington across the table to his lordship, for his perusal and edification.

"Well," said Lord Tom, "what in the world would you have?—here is consent, or the deuce is in it. I don't see exactly how you could get out of the business after this."

"I tell you, my lord, I cut and run," said Jack. "What I saw the evening before last, when I went, settled it. I took my hat and walked—wouldn't even stop to supper:—a regular turn off."

"What *did* you see," said Lord Tom.

"Mum!" said Jack, "that never passes my lips. Where the female sex is concerned, honour is everything. I know you wouldn't wish me to say more: the thing's over now, and there's an end: but if I *do* marry, rely upon it, neither Mrs. Dallington nor Miss Englefield shall visit my wife: that's all:—*entree nows*, as the French say, and no mistake."

"Well, I am sorry to hear this," said Lord Tom; "for although, somehow, I was never a favourite there, I had the merit of introducing you to them, and I wish the acquaintance had been more satisfactory. I suppose they will take up with their long-dangling lovers."

"Perhaps yes," said Brag, putting his finger to his nose—"perhaps no: that's no affair of mine. All I mean to say is, the ladies are 'much of a muchness,' as I *could* show you—only, as I say, honour's the thing, and no mistake."

"I believe, Jack," said Lord Tom, "you have a great deal to answer for. What's gone with the unfortunate victim of your success whom we met in Regent Street?"

"Hang me if I know!" said Jack. "Poor girl! I sometimes do think of *her*. Wouldn't do now for a wife—but—else—nice little thing in her way."

"Didn't you say she was somehow connected with you?" said Lord Tom.

"Yes, distantly—very distantly," said Jack, wondering in his own mind when he had ever been sufficiently candid, or drunk, to have admitted the connexion in any degree whatever: "her brother, the Major married a relative of mine."

"I think it is rather lucky," said Lord Tom, "that her brother, the Major, does not take it into his head to make some enquiries upon the subject of the affair."

"He's abroad," said Jack; "besides—all snug—never suspected. Her mother wonders why I have cut them, no doubt:—out of my line—can't keep on visiting:—one thing at one time, eh! different at another, you know don't mean to marry her, eh!—a little too late, eh!—all that sort of thing."

Lord Tom, since the affair of the "Bridge" appointment, and the disclosures which the respectable Mrs. Brag had thought proper to make upon that occasion, began to grow a little more suspicious of his friend's strict adherence to the truth than he previously had been; but as he was bound to countenance him as long as he remained in society, by his pecuniary obligations to him, he resolved to keep secret all the facts which had come to his knowledge, but at the same time more attentively to watch his future proceedings: indeed, the matter of Mrs. Dallington's note which he exhibited, combined with Brag's manner in describing his own indignation and disgust, had the effect of rather unsettling his mind upon *that* business, and he resolved to write to somebody in town for a correct version of the break-off, which, under the circumstances, could not fail to create a sensation in—as everybody calls his own circle—"the world;" Lord Tom thinking, that if Jack were convicted of romancing at the expense of the characters of all the men and women with whom he was permitted to associate, it would be absolutely necessary to shake him off, and leave him to any legal remedy he might think fit to adopt for the recovery of the money he had borrowed of him, which his lordship quite well knew he had lent as a consideration for any good offices which he might be able to do for him in the way of patronage.

After the discussion of breakfast, my lord and his little-expected tiger began their perambulations. The Pier was visited, although the freshness of the breeze kept the "females" from that delightful promenade. In the course of their walk they encountered

6

a certain Sir James Gunnersbury, an old artillery officer of Lord Tom's acquaintance, who with the greatest warmth and cordiality invited his lordship to dine with him that day *sans façon*, if he happened to be disengaged.

The critical moment had arrived, and Jack, who heard the invitation given actually shook with apprehension as to the course his noble friend might think fit to pursue; his delight was great however, when he heard his noble patron hesitatingly decline the bidding on the score of being engaged to "his friend, who was on a visit to him for a few days." The truth was, that Lord Tom had no great inclination to accept the invitation, and rather wished to back out upon the plea of being tied to his visitor. The gallant officer, however, was quite resolved to have him, and entreated his lordship to do him the favour to present him to his companion, in order that he might express his wish that *he* also would honour him and Lady Gunnersbury with his company.

To Jack this was the most agreeable thing in the world; and if it had not been so, it would have been extremely difficult to evade it. Brag looked at his lordship, who made no sign of either a negative or an affirmative character, and accordingly his "friend" bowed, rather awkwardly, and said he should be most happy: and the affair being settled, Sir James, "his pig-tail fluttering in the wind," made the best of his way home to the house which he and his family occupied in the Parade.

"Rather a nuisance," said Lord Tom; after he had taken his departure: "deuced dull his parties in town:—Lady Gunnersbury, the greatest bore on earth—and two daughters, who sing all night; a remarkably slow coach of a son,—and not a particularly good cook. However, we may see something to amuse us."

"Daughters!" said Brag: "rich—eh?"

"Poor as church mice, I take it," said his lordship, "and no beauties:—fancy themselves blue."

"Blue!" said Jack—"what an odd notion."

"Very odd, indeed," replied Lord Tom; "but they talk—as you will hear. All I hope is, it is not a mere family party—for we shall die of the blues ourselves if it is."

Brag, who was too happy at the idea of opening a new connexion, now that he saw his noble friend's kindness of manner towards him, began to wish that he had at once proceeded to "The Ship," instead of having studied economy so deeply as to enseoince himself in a minor and obscure house of entertainment;—it would be so much more convenient—so much more agreeable—and he could then be continually with his noble friend:—but now the great difficulty, in his small mind, was how to get his portmanteau and bag conveyed from "The Three Mackerels" to the leading hotel of the place. This required considerable dexterity to manage, but at last

his genius triumphed; and having got into his apartment, he sent for a fly, in which he deposited his property; and having driven to the hotel, paid the fly-driver his fare, and dismissed him without permitting him to exchange a syllable with any of the waiters, or ostlers, or porters near, which might have the effect of enlightening them as to the "place from whence he came:" such pains and trouble did he always take, to seem to be, that which he was not, nor ever could be.

Upon this special occasion he was remarkably unfortunate; for although he had managed so much of the affair as has just been described, he was not destined to sail out of it altogether with flying colours. It was about five o'clock in the afternoon when some gay friends of Lord Tom's had just arrived at the "Ship," whence they were to start for Calais in the morning, to whom his lordship had just introduced our hero, and the coffee-room was thickly peopled with persons of certain consideration, when a waiter advanced to Jack, who was laying down the law about some horse that was to run at Doncaster in a somewhat authoritative tone, and told him a young woman wished to speak to him.

"Hallo! Jack," said Lord Tom—"what! at your old tricks already!—more fascinations—no time lost. Where is she?"

"At the door, my lord," said the waiter.

"I'll come this moment," said Jack. "'Pon my life! I don't know what it means."

"By Jove! but we'll see," said his lordship; and accordingly he and the two or three men of his group who perceived that they might presume a little upon the goodnature of their new acquaintance Brag, rushed out into the hall, where stood before them on the steps, a poor wretched-looking girl, wearing black stockings, a cracked chip bonnet, a begrimed gown, and a dirty green baize apron.

The moment the horrid vision met Brag's eyes, he recognized it:—it was the one sole, solitary she-servant of the pot-house he had so skilfully abandoned.

"Oh! sir," said the girl,—“I beg your pardon,—but missus found your nightcap and comb in the attic after you were gone—so she bid me run and bring them to you.”

"Where do you come from, my dear?" said Lord Tom, with a killing gravity of countenance.

"'The Three Mackerels,'" said the girl, "where that little gentleman in the white cords slept last night." Saying which, she produced the articles in question,—the cap not bearing quite the lily-hue, and the comb, unclean as it was, being somewhat scant of teeth.

The expression of Jack's countenance at the moment this exhibition took place was beyond description wretched. The friend and associate of Lord Tom Towzle—the companion of peers and

dandies—to be the owner of two such objects!—as the French say; and that those *objects* should have been transmitted to him from the “attic” of “The Three Mackerels,” where he “had slept the night before!”

But the worst was not yet over:—what was he to do with the cap and comb, now that he had gotten them?—for he had, almost unconsciously, taken them into his possession:—Throw them away he could not; deny them he dare not,—for, upon the edge of the cap, the letters B, R, A, G, were marked in red silk capitals. Must he “quit the gay throng,” and carry them himself up to his present dormitory?—or must he spread the history of the affair still more, by handing them over to a waiter or a chambermaid to deposit them there for him?

The laughter which this incident provoked it was impossible for the spectators entirely to conceal; and the fact it elicited, as to the “*venue*” of Jack’s last night’s lodging, did not at all decrease Lord Tom’s suspicions that his friend was habitually disposed to justify his possession of the name in which he rejoiced.

Brag thought, and thought wisely, that the best thing he could do was to, what he called “cut and run;” and so if he could not check the mirth which the exposure of his weakness had excited, he might at all events escape the misery of hearing it ringing in peals round his devoted head; accordingly, grasping the night-cap and comb, and devoutly wishing both of them midway between Calais and Dover, or anywhere else in the world but where they were, he bounded up stairs to his newly-acquired apartment.

Had so miserable an animal as a punster been present at Brag’s sudden departure, there would have doubtlessly been sundry criminalities committed in the way of quibbles, about Brag’s being armed *cap*-a pied but not *comb*-il-faut, or some such nonsense; luckily, however, the audience and spectators were well-bred, well-dressed gentlemen, and disdained a joke with as much sovereign contempt as if they could have made one themselves. They looked at each other; those with mustachios twisted their whiskers—those with none, rubbed their foreheads; and all of them turned involuntarily to Lord Tom, as the sun of the sun-flowers; in hopes of ascertaining who the little gentleman in the white cords was, who had just run up stairs with part of his bed-room furniture from the sign of “The Three Mackerels.”

Lord Tom was a man of the world, as the reader may naturally believe: by his manner he repudiated any intimate acquaintance with Jack; proclaimed him an excellent rider, light weight, and up to any hounds; and further announced his intention of taking him over to Paris, to “astonish the natives” in the Champ de Mars by carrying off all the prizes at the races on the following Sunday, to the infinite dismay of the sporting world of that lively city.

His lordship accompanied this account of his obsequious friend with an indescribable look, which left his lordship entirely exonerated from any responsibility on the score of his manners or habits, and gave a tone to the character of the *liaison* between them, in the smallest degree flattering to the vulgar coxcomb who had recently escaped.

When the hour of dressing for dinner approached, Brag "showed" again—the coast was then clear; but Lord Tom, if he had not very much desired to benefit himself by Jack's only available accomplishment on the turf, and had not moreover felt conscious of the "debt of honour, which must be paid," would most gladly have either persuaded him not to accompany him to General Gunnersbury's, or to permit him to send an excuse on account of a sudden attack of spasms—a raging tooth-ache—or any other of those "ills which flesh is heir to," and which, as Dr. Short told Mr. Brown in India, make no external show; but Jack would not give his lordship the slightest chance or opportunity to get off the engagement.

It was just as the clock was striking seven that Lord Tom and his squire proceeded on foot, enveloped in cloaks to screen themselves from the effects of a regular gale of wind across the bridge, and pursued their way along the coast, making first for Mrs. Dunsell's baths, and thence taking a fresh departure for the great bombardier's hospitable mansion on the Parade—a perfect silence having been observed by both parties as to the episode of the cap and comb, any reference to which, Lord Tom knew would be unpleasant to his companion, and the particulars of which he thought it most judicious not to touch upon, since, as the reader knows, his lordship meant to make use of Jack on the race-course.

When the visitors entered the drawing-room, Lord Tom was horror-struck and Jack delighted at finding a large party already assembled, amongst whom were several people whom he knew, and some few whom he did not know: however, the body consisted of not less than fourteen persons, who were destined to be crammed into a dining parlour, licensed, by size, not to carry more than ten inside.

Jack was presented to Lady Gunnersbury, who did not hear his name, and subsequently to the two young ladies—young by courtesy—upon whom Jack, very shortly after the performance of the ceremony of introduction, began to play off some of his most insinuating tricks. The way in which the tall, gaunt damsels looked at him, most forcibly reminded Lord Tom, who was watching his progress, of the regards of mingled curiosity and surprise with which the Brobdingnagian virgins considered Gulliver; Jack, however, nothing daunted, went off at score; and during the dreadful

quarter of an hour before dinner, when the company were as cold and as stiff as wax-work, Jack's voice was specially audible. When, however, dinner was announced, the unfortunate interference of precedence with pleasure threw him out, and he found himself last, and "least," except young Gunnersbury, to quit the drawing-room, the fair ladies of the party being appropriated to persons having ascertainable rank, and he left next what he called the "crowpee," with the back of his head exposed not only to the draughts of wind from the sea, which found their way through the hall, but to certain thumps and bumps of the door of the room itself, whenever it was necessary to open or shut it.

The "crowpee" was, of course, young Gunnersbury; and Jack's left-hand neighbour was a German baron, who spoke no English. The heir of the house was particularly fine; and even if he condescended to notice any of the stray guests whom his father was in the habit of inviting, while they were actually at table, made a point of cutting them dead, if he met them anywhere else the next day. He took an inveterate aversion at first sight, from Jack and his curls and studs, and never deigned even to look at, much less to speak to him, throughout the rest of the dinner: Jack's position was therefore not particularly enviable.

To describe accurately Lady Gunnersbury's character and conversation is, I apprehend, beyond the reach of pen. The old lady, who neither looked, nor, it is to be presumed, felt old, lived in a state of perpetual anxiety to talk to everybody near and about her, upon every subject which they might be discussing, being at the same time most punctiliously, or rather pesteringly, civil and attentive to her guests, especially at dinner. This assiduity was derived from the age and mode in which she had been educated; and her evident anxiety to talk with everybody about everything arose from the circumstance of her having once been deaf for several years together, of which infirmity, Time, or some successful aurist, had cured her. It was her desire to show not only that she was no longer deaf, but that she could hear half a dozen things at once, and reply to them all, that produced an effect of which I despair of being able to convey even a faint idea.

On the right hand of her ladyship, who assumed the head of the table, sat the Earl of Dullingham; on the left, Lord Tom, next to whom the Countess was placed, on the right hand of Sir James Gunnersbury, on whose left was Mrs. Carnaby; next to her was seated a Mr. Paddle, and between him and the "crowpee" Mr. Carnaby. Next the earl, on the other side of the table, was the elder Miss Gunnersbury; and between her and her sister Sir Henry Rockly. Next to the younger miss was deposited the German baron; and between the baron and the "crowpee," Brag.

Seated and settled, and the soup discussed, the conversation be-

came general, but not universal. The neighbours who were acquainted with each other began to chat; the Earl and Maria—the Countess and Sir James—Lady Gunnersbury and Lord Tom—Rockly and Eliza—Paddle and Mrs. Carnaby—Carnaby and young Gunnersbury;—but Brag and the Baron were basketed. Had Brag been placed next either of the girls, he flattered himself, from the play he had made up-stairs, and the way in which his little attentions had been received, that he should have got on remarkably well, and no mistake; but being hedged in between two men, one of whom could not, and the other of whom would not, speak, was anything but smack smooth, straight up and right down, in his opinion.

When the Bable-like noise of the jovial party was at its height, Lady Gunnersbury began to be in her glory: in every dialogue she must have a word—in every tête-à-tête discussion and interference; and in something like this fashion did she continue one incessant gabble of confusion, such as could not well have been worse confounded.

“My dear Lord, take some of these cutlets.—I think so, Mrs. Carnaby, ; always said she was beautiful; dresses so well.—Done with sause *à la Soubise*.—I’m glad you like Dover, Lord Thomas; the pier is so charming—so fine and clear in a morning-walk.—Looks so well in that pretty pink bonnet, Mrs. Carnaby.—Thank you, I’ll take the sweet: limit myself to two glasses at dinner.—Capital invention,—four thousand gallons in a minute!—Very full, just now.—Maria, what will you have, dear?—you eat nothing.—Wonderful accumulation of shingle.—As you say, Sir Henry, what a man Shakspeare was!—dear, dear!—quite a wonder rising in that dark age.—Striped red and white, was it, Mr. Paddle?—I love balloons.—Sir Walter Raleigh wrote it, my lord: I heard you ask Maria. I forget how many plays he wrote—fifty-two, I think. What a shocking thing to cut his head off, my lord, after all that time—wasn’t it?—A blue body with red wheels—I heard you tell Sir James about the coach.—So superior to any writer of his time.—With morocco squabs.—A little bread-sauce, if you please.—From Lord Mackdauld’s place in Scotland; always sends us plenty.—Tremendous sight the parachute, as you say.—Come in boxes once a week. I don’t think it quite so good as his last.—I heard your opinion of Captain Marryat’s book; one of our very best writers.—Meyer and Miller make for Sir James: you were asking my son, Mr. Carnaby, about shoemaking.—In three volumes, with plates—And a little of the *fondue*.—We get it from the library.—Eliza, dear, Mr. Paddle wishes to drink wine with you. Different place this from Paris, Mr. Paddle.—With a shifting rumble, Sir James, if you please.—Won’t Baron Bumbeltronden take *fondue*? You speak German, Eliza, ask the baron; I don’t: I

am no great linguist. I am very much of the opinion that one tongue is sufficient for one woman."

"Especially, my dear," said Sir James, "if, like Dr. Johnson's memorable sheep's tail, it be long enough."

Under the heavy fire of my lady's eloquence, the dinner proceeded as dinners usually do. Jack had not opened his lips, except to put the viands and wines of his gallant host into his mouth; and although Lord Tom supported him by asking him to drink wine with him, young Gunnersbury devoted himself entirely to Carnaby, to whom, when he did speak, he spoke in an under-tone, keeping, as it were, aloof from all the guests excepting the Earl and Countess, to whom he was obsequiously polite, and Sir Henry Rockly, to whom he was remarkably civil. Sir James, however, called upon Jack to do him a similar favour to that which he had done Lord Tom; but in inviting him to the social intercourse, he unfortunately called him Mr. Brag, instead of Brag, which excited some attention, caused a slight whispering, and excited a few titterings.

There is always in women a goodness of feeling towards those whom they imagine to be ill at ease with themselves; a kind of pity certainly not akin to love, but which shows itself in an anxiety to "make things agreeable." This sort of sentiment both the young ladies entertained towards Brag: they saw how perfectly uncomfortable he was, and Eliza, who was nearer to him than her sister, after ineffectually telegraphing her brother to be civil to the stranger, put herself sufficiently forward to afford him a gracious look, which encouraged him to suggest a glass of champagne. Had he seen the expression of young Gunnersbury's countenance while this ceremony was in progress, it would have turned his Sillieri into prussic acid: the frown he bestowed upon his sister the first time their eyes met after it was over, even more distinctly marked his high mightiness's entire disapproval of the whole proceeding.

According to Brag's calculation, they had sat at least five hours after dinner before Lady Gunnersbury, whose incessant volubility it would be impossible to follow, at least with any chance of catching it; until at length that exemplary lady at once delighted and astounded him by announcing the retreat of the ladies.

"Dear Lady Dullingham, I am ready," said the hostess. "I see, Sir James; hate the custom nevertheless—separating after dinner.—I hear you, Sir Henry: with a band of music and a cold collation, I agree; but in England.—Oh, fie! Mr. Paddle, that is really ungallant—unlike you.—In a barge by moonlight; don't do so in Paris, Sir Henry.—What Eliza says is quite right; but such a bad singer: however, we must bow to custom, Lady Dullingham.—I quite agree with you, Mrs. Carnaby, about the bull-fights.—Isn't it quite extraordinary?—Prejudice and custom, as you say.—Lights upstairs.—With the matadores and picadores, and—The

omelette soufflée, Sir Henry, I know.—Delicate creatures, indeed!—handfuls of nuts to throw the men down.—Very extraordinary.—At Tortoni's, Hardy's, or anywhere else, all the same.—Entirely steam.—Very fine sight, I dare say—two hundred horse power.—The meat, I believe, is given to the poor.—The "Net pit" is the only thing she does decently well.—I differ with you still about the omelette.—Dragged away by horses.—Dear George, do ring the bell."

The last words were music to Jack's ears; and they were followed, in less than five minutes, by the adjournment of the "females," Lady Gunnersbury stopping kindly to hope that he had not felt any draught of air from the door during dinner,—an act of civility and courtesy which her son, by his look, deemed entirely superfluous, but which induced Sir James, the moment the ladies were gone, to insist upon Brag's closing up on his side, in order to rescue him from the taciturnity of the baron, and the studied coldness of his son.

Lord Tom, in the plenitude of his good-nature, seeing Brag so unusually nervous and depressed, became anxious to put him at his ease, and bring him out; besides which, he felt in some sort offended by the supercilious manner which Mr. Gunnersbury had thought proper to adopt towards a guest of his father's whom he knew to be a friend of his. His lordship therefore gave Brag an "excellent character" in a whisper to Sir James, and, above all, lauded his judgment in horsemanship and his skill in equitation, to which he was the more readily inclined because his praises upon that point were really well-merited, and because the noble and taciturn Earl of Dullingham, who sat on the opposite side of the table, had been, in his day, a great sporting man, and who, although now declined into the vale of years, and retired from "the turf," still, as the old coachman loves the crack of the whip, entered with more interest into conversations touching such matters than any other.

"It strikes me," said Sir James, "that our Government ought in some way to interfere in order to prevent the exportation of our best English horses, the effect of which must eventually be, not only the improvement of the breed in countries which, however peaceable the world looks just now, must and will, in the course of time, be at war with us, but the deprival of the English cavalry of their acknowledged superiority in cattle! at all events, over our enemies."

"If I had *my way*," said Brag encouraged by the deference with which Sir James addressed this observation specially to him, "not a nag should go abroad—no, not at any price. I have been over and over again offered lumps of money for some of my hunters to go to France and Germany, and the deuce knows where. No,

says I, not a bit of it: I'm English from top to toe—straight up, right down, and no mistake. I'll be no party to mending the foreign breed, let what may happen."

The German baron coughed, and young Gunnersbury silently expressed his astonishment at the burst which his father's injudicious patronage of the stranger had occasioned.

"You are a true sportsman, sir," said Lord Dullingham, gravely taking a pinch of snuff.

"And," said Lord Tom, "as good a rider as you'll see from Totness to Newcastle."

"I do flatter myself," said Jack, "I can come it strong in that line"—(Here Sir Henry Rockly exchanged a look with Carnaby)—

"and no mistake. Lord Tom knows what I'm up to. In one week I've hunted five times, rode two trotting matches, and three steeple chases, picked up a hundred stones with my mouth in fifty-five minutes, and killed two hundred and nineteen brace of partridges."

"With a long bow," said somebody, loud enough to be heard by everybody except Jack himself, who was now on his hobby.

"I stick at nothing in that way," said Brag—"do I, my lord?"—looking at Lord Tom. "Many a time I've gone after hounds for twenty minutes, as blind as a bat, as wet as a rat, and as sick as a cat, with the skin of my leg rasped up by the top of a grower from my shin to my knee, and only brought to my senses then by bumping my head right against that of my horse, for all the world like a flash of lightning, that loosened all my teeth in their sockets. That's what I call going across a country, and no mistake. I'd have backed my "Tantrum" against anything of his age and inches that ever switched rasper. Jem Jiggins had the handling of him for some time, and a queer one he was, at first; but they as begins rum, turns out generally well in the end. One day, however, sold him:—run three foxes, one after another, right on end, seventy-two miles and a half in all!—he was done:—got my money for him though, after that. Had him painted; the picture is now at a little place I have in Surrey, with me on his back, topping a flight of rails, just alongside of "Fly-away Dick," with portraits of two or three Melton men in the distance—eh!—that's good."

This sudden dash out of his super-incumbent despair, and the way in which he helped himself to the veteran bombardier's portwine, in preference to claret, convinced Lord Tom that he was determined to rally against the tyrannical treatment which he had received from the young squire.

"Have you hunted much in Dorsetshire, sir?" said the earl; "if you have not, I should think the Vale of Blackmore would give you some opportunities of showing your skill amongst the drains: half the fences are double, and the ditches wide and deep."

"No, my lord," said Brag, "I've never seen much of that country,

but shouldn't care if I did. I've heard of it, and all the history of Oliver's blind mare; but folks *do* stretch sometimes. There's a story of a Lord Penfeather, or some such chap, which he used to tell of himself—of taking a double fence and a double ditch, and afterwards clearing a Dorchester doctor, horse and all, who had grounded on the top of his nob just outside a drain beyond *that* :—that's what I call going it. However, nobody's alive that saw it, so we have it all upon my lord's word, and that's not much of a go, I take it."

A sudden death-like silence ensued, interrupted only by a few hems from Sir James Gunnersbury and Sir Henry Rockly, a look of dismay from Lord Tom, and a simper of exultation from the young squire. The pause did not last long; everybody appeared astonished, but nobody more than Jack. The silence was at last broken.

"I assure you sir," said Lord Dullingham, in the most solemn manner, "the story is true—the doctor's name was Flapps. He indeed is dead, but there are others who saw it done, still living."

"Oh," said Brag, still unenlightened, "I don't know—but I *do* know a great many of Lord Penfeather's friends who say 'no go.' If your lordship saw it, why, in that case, it's all right, and no mistake; but from what they say of the chap himself who said he did it, why—"

"I did it myself, sir!" said the earl, more energetically than he usually said anything, drawing himself up into an erect position, looking pitchforks and tenter-hooks at Brag, and taking a pinch of snuff with all the dignity of the old school.

"That is Lord Penfeather," said Lord Tom, wishing to bring the affair to a speedy conclusion; "at least he was so, when he took the extraordinary leap in question."

"Oh!" said Brag, turning as white as a sheet—"Ah!—yes, my lord—*I*—"

At this most critical minute, when acted upon by various and very different feelings, every gentleman present most anxiously expected a *dénouement*, the butler, an old and valued servant of Sir James, made his appearance to announce coffee in the drawing-room, and being privileged, by long service, to use a certain degree of familiarity with his master, added, in an audible whisper to that exemplary officer—"There's a large brig come ashore at the back of the pier, Sir James: it's blowing terrible hard—and they are afraid she'll be totally lost."

"Brig ashore!" cried Brag, most unceremoniously availing himself of a communication not made to him, and at the same moment jumping up—"I'm off, Sir James; excuse me—I *may* be of use :—swim like an otter. Swam all the way from Oxford to London in nineteen hours without stopping. Have saved nine lives already :

got three medals from the Humane Society : don't value the surf of a sixpence. I'll bet fifty to four I'm on board that brig in ten minutes from leaving your house—back in less than an hour. I know you'll excuse me :—don't you think I'm right—eh? Humanity—philanthropy—and all that—straight up, right down, and no mistake. Be with you again almost directly."

Saying which, and without waiting for an answer, away Jack hustled, leaving his astonished companions in amazement ; Lord Tom, however, not a little annoyed that he should, in the end, have so far justified young Gunnersbury's *hauteur* in the beginning.

The earl bore the imputation of exaggerating his leap with perfect good-humour, and explained to the rest of the party his own astonishment at the occurrence ; but Lord Tom, beaten by the event, declined going up-stairs, upon the plea of endeavouring to prevent his friend from rashly endangering his life ; and when the other guests repaired to the drawing-room, he hastened to the beach, where, truly indeed, the sea was breaking over the ill-fated vessel, which kept striking so awfully and so frequently, as to leave little hope of her extrication. He could, however, learn no tidings of Brag. It was quite true however, that a venturesome gentleman had been seen swimming with a rope through the surf, and had succeeded in rescuing two ladies—but he was gone ; and so, after an hour's fruitless search for his intrepid friend, Lord Tom proceeded to "The Ship," where he found that Mr. Brag, after having read the day's London paper, and drunk two glasses of hot brandy and water, had gone to bed, and had been, at the time of his lordship's arrival, more than an hour snug in his "nest."

CHAPTER XII.

"RATHER put your foot into it last night, Jack," said Lord Tom to the tiger when they met at breakfast.

"R-a-ther," said Jack. "How the deuce should I know that that greyheaded gig was the chap who took the flying-leap in the Vale of Blackmore half a century ago?"

"You got off deuced well," said Lord Tom ; "for although Dullingham is too old to fight, there might have been a bother if it had not been for the brig."

"Never saw a finer sight !" said Jack. "Told you I'd soon be aboard : the minute I got down, saw two females waving white handkerchiefs—signals of distress : off I went—caught hold of the rope—clung like a cat—splash through the surf—up the side—seized hold of them, held on by my teeth, and slipped along the bows : put one girl under each arm, for all the world like a fowl with the

gizzard under one wing and the liver under the other, and landed them in less than a quarter of an hour, safe and sound, smack, smooth, and no mistake."

"Their gratitude, I suppose, was unbounded," said Lord Tom, whose doubts of his friend's strict adherence to truth began hourly to increase.

"Gratitude!" said Jack—"they are females;—when did you ever hear of an ungrateful female?"

"Did you make yourself known to them?" said Lord Tom.

"Not I," said Jack—"leave that for to-day. I hate boasting and puffing: if I had said who I was, the chances are, it would have been stuck in the newspapers. I can't stand notoriety: don't mind it in my own line—sporting, and all that sort of thing; but else, all quiet and snug—mum's the word, and no mistake."

"I admire your modesty," said Lord Tom; "and your coming home here and going quietly to bed, without saying a syllable of the matter to the master of the house, or any of the waiters, shows your desire to be unknown and unnoticed. Didn't they see the condition in which you were when you came back?"

"Condition!" said Jack—"I was in no condition."

"Not wet?" said Lord Tom.

"On the contrary," said Jack, "I was uncommon dry. Sir Gunnersbury's port was what I call regular black-strap—Day and Martin—eh!—and no mistake."

"Why didn't you drink his claret?" said Lord Tom.

"Red pickled-cabbage juice bottled," said Jack:—"no—I had two glasses of hot 'with' when I came home, and then turned in."

"But did you sit in your wet clothes?" said Lord Tom.

"Wet clothes!" said Jack. "Oh! wet clothes—eh! in getting aboard the brig:—pshaw! my dear lord—nothing—a mere fleabite—salt water never gives cold—I blew myself dry running home."

"Pleasant, gentlemanly man, young Gunnersbury," said Lord Tom, swallowing the explanation without any apparent effort.

"I never sighted such a fellow in the whole course of my run," said Jack. "You saw how I treated him—cut him dead—never so much as looked at him after the first glance: no life's too short to waste upon such a scarecrow as that. Eliza's not bad—has eyes, eh!—and knows how to use them. Mother's a droll woman."

"Droll!—a polyglot," said Lord Tom.

"Oh! her name was Glot?" said Jack:—"rather old to be called Polly now. That Mrs. Carnaby looks lively; I take it. *She* has eyes too, and *she* knows how to use them. Carnaby seems a steady, respectable sort of man; I suppose, it wouldn't be straight up and right down to disturb his domestic happiness,—else, my lord—eh! I say nothing—only—I know the sex, and no mistake."

"I know nothing of either of them," said Lord Tom. "We must call on the Gunnersburys, however, to-day."

"When we are sure they are out," said Jack, who had scarcely uttered the words before he astonished Lord Tom by thrusting his head out of the window, and exclaiming—"By Job! it is, and no mistake!"

"Who?—what?" cried his lordship, half frightened at the energetic manner of his companion.

"George Brown," replied Jack: "if ever I saw George Brown in my life, he has just this minute gone out of this house with another gentleman."

"And who is George Brown?" said Lord Tom; "and where's the wonder?"

"Wonder enough, my lord," said Jack, "if you knew all; why, he is the major you have heard me talk of so often."

"Oh!" said Lord Tom, "the brother of your deserted damsel?—hadn't you better brush up your pistols, and make your will."

"No, no," said Jack, "not exactly that; but I'll just ask the question. I know I can't be deceived in my man, although he looks older and browner than he did when I saw him last." Saying which, he rang the bell.

Of the waiter who obeyed the summons he made his inquiries, and found, according to his anticipation, that it *was* the identical George Brown himself. In a moment Jack, who had always hitherto slurred over his connexion with this said George in his communings with Lord Tom, being convinced by the waiter's account that he had by some means become rich and prosperous, immediately altered his tone.

"Mr. Brown and his lady are going off to-morrow for Calais," said the man. "They would have gone to-day, but they were too late to get their carriages on board."

"Is Mrs. Brown here?" said Jack.

"Yes, sir," said the man; and being asked no more questions, retired.

"That's a lucky chance," said Jack. "I'll go to her this moment—find out all, how, and about it: can't make it out just yet."

"What! do you know the lady?" said Lord Tom.

"Know her!" said Jack; "shouldn't wonder: why, she's my sister, that's all."

"Your sister!" said his lordship; "I never understood you that the major was your brother-in-law. You always said that he was a distant connexion."

"So he was," said Jack, "when he was in India; he is nearer now. So up I go, smack smooth, and no mistake. Come along, my lord, I'll introduce you to Kitty; it will be a regular surprise upon her; and when George comes back he'll stare like a stuck pig. I like a surprise."

"I'm your man," said Lord Tom. "I shall enjoy the sight of your meeting."

"Here, waiter," said Jack; "which room is Mrs. Brown in?"

"That room, sir," said the waiter. "Do you wish to—"

"No, no," said Brag, in a half whisper; "don't say anything—I'm her brother. Want to astonish her; she don't know I'm here: haven't seen her for years. Hush!—now, my lord—" At this period of his conversation, the dexterous gentleman gently opened the door, and stepping softly up to the lady, exclaimed in a voice sweet as the music of the spheres—"Kitty!—I say, Kitty, my Kit!"

The noise roused the lady, who was sitting with her back to the door, reading: she turned round, started from her seat, and presented to the eyes of the astonished Jack, and his much-mystified companion, a beautiful countenance, in which an expression of alarm and surprise was predominant, but which, as the reader has, no doubt, anticipated, was not that of the *ci-devant* Kitty Brag.

The group were at what Sheridan, in "The Critic," calls a "dead lock."

"Why, it isn't Kitty!" said Jack.

"I believe there is some mistake," said Mrs. Brown, at the same moment extending her hand towards the bell-rope.

"Your name is Brown, ma'am, isn't it?" said Jack.

"It is," said the lady.

"Wife of George Brown, from India?" said Jack.

"Yes, sir."

"Can't make it out," said Jack.

"If you have any commands for Mr. Brown, sir," said the lady, "he will be here in a few minutes."

"You had better return *then*," said Lord Tom, who saw that his expert friend had somehow got into a new scrape, and that the lady was extremely desirous of getting rid of his society.

"It's all right, by Job!" said Jack; "there's some kink or caddle somewhere, but in the main it's all straight up, right down, and no mistake,—for here's Nancy, as nice as Nip."

These words were uttered, accompanied with a caper such as would not have disgraced a dancing-master, and followed by a scream of horror from Anne, who at that moment entered the room, and who, as Jack advanced to take her hand, fell senseless into a chair.

The changes which had taken place in Jack's views and intentions during a shorter period than the relation of this event requires, were most particularly characteristic. That Brown was Brown, browner than he was, Jack was convinced; that his wife was not Kitty at once pointed out to him that his sister must be dead, and that George had remarried: hence, like lightning, it darted into his mind that it must have been through *her* that he had acquired

the means of living as it too manifestly appeared he did: inasmuch as, besides the waiter's previous representation of the difficulty of "embarking the carriages," the sudden appearance of a valet, two lady's maids, and a strapping livery servant, jacketed, topped, and leathered for travelling, who rushed into the apartment at the tinnabulary summons of Mrs. Brown, confirmed him in the opinion that his now readily acknowledged brother-in-law had become wealthy, and consequently important, and was therefore much to be cherished and toadied.

These momentarily excited feelings were, as it were, electrically driven into another channel the instant he beheld Anne Brown. There she was,—she who had confessed her affection for him,—the sister of the rich and prosperous George, now, in his own opinion, a suitable match for him: and in less than a second more he had resolved that the meek, the mild, the modest unoffending creature whom he had neglected, slighted, and traduced for years, should still be his; and that they would somehow, in the end, make a snug family circle, all right, and no mistake.

"What on earth does all this mean?" said a gentleman entering the room in the midst of the confusion:—"what has happened?"

By this time Anne had been led, or rather carried, from the sitting-room by Mrs. Brown and her maid. For a moment the last-arrived gentleman was absent, and the two intruders were left alone in the apartment.

"Missed your tip, somehow, Jack," said Lord Tom.

"All right in the end," said Jack. "Don't you remember our little friend in Regent Street?—that's Nancy."

"Oh!" said my lord, looking uncommonly wise.

"Exactly so," said Jack, looking particularly cunning.

"Gentlemen," said the stranger, re-entering the room, "I am yet to learn the cause of your abrupt visit to these apartments."

"It's all right," said Jack—"all fair and above board. George Brown married my sister—that's the mistake. This lady is not my sister—that's clear as light. I never heard of poor Kitty's death!—but she's gone, no doubt, and George will tell us all about it. But George has a sister too: Nancy;—and if I flurried her at first seeing me after so long a parting, I'm deuced sorry for that. However, it's all natural: and so I'll call in by-and-by, when George comes back. Sunshine after rain, and no mistake. This, sir, is my friend, Lord Thomas Towzle—so that's all right."

"I believe," said the gentleman, "if you are the brother of the former Mrs. Brown, I have heard your name mentioned as a very particular friend of Mr. Brown's sister."

"R-a-ther so," said Jack, "but circumstances occurred to keep us apart. Never had but one feeling towards her—I believe it is

what you call reciprocal; and I am denced sorry I took her so aback: however, by-and-by, as I say——”

“Sir,” said the gentleman, “what course Mr. Brown may choose to pursue towards you I am at a loss to conjecture; but with respect to his sister, it becomes *my* duty to act for myself—I am her husband, sir: although I assumed that character only three days since, it is *my* province to protect her from insult and alarm. Permit me to say, sir, that your absence is what we all most particularly desire: indeed, that we should have been favoured by your presence did not enter into our calculations, although we were accidentally made aware of your residence in this house shortly after our arrival.”

“Married to *my* Nancy!” said Jack; “oh, that is a go!”

“Yes, sir,” said Dr. Mead, for it was he who spoke; “and not married to her, until, in the candour and ingenuousness of her heart and mind, she had informed me of all the circumstances of your early acquaintance;—nay, more, sir, of the preference for you which she at that time acknowledged. If you will take the trouble to cast a retrospective glance over your conduct during a period when you might have properly evinced the sincerity of your professions—and the total neglect of a being whom you fancied your victim, you will perhaps perceive through the gloom a glimmering of light sufficient to show you the indelicacy and impropriety of your remaining one minute longer in this room.”

“What! did she tell you *all*?” said Jack, quite at sea, and scarcely knowing what he said.

“All, sir,” said the doctor; “but perhaps not *quite* all that you have permitted your licentious tongue to utter.”

“I—sir—I?” said Jack.

“Come,” said Lord Tom, “you had better come away.”

“But my sister—” said Jack.

“Delicacy, sir,” said Dr. Mead, “seals my lips with regard to that unfortunate person. She is in her grave, to which she was borne, unfollowed by an injured, outraged husband. It is fit you should know this; and it is fortunate that the duty of telling you the bitter truth devolves rather upon *me* than on my brother-in-law himself.”

“By Job!” said Jack, scratching his head.

“Indeed, I would venture to suggest your retiring,” said the doctor, “before his return from his walk. His affection for his mother and sister is ardent and strong; and if he found you here, something perhaps might occur which, for all our sakes, had better be avoided.”

“Oh,” said Jack, “in course I’ll not stop a minute—no:—as you say, there’s no use in that kind of thing. It is all very surprising, and particularly unpleasant: but you, sir, are a gentle-

man, and act as such ; not that I have the pleasure of knowing your name, but ——”

“ My name is Mead,” said the doctor ; “ and I feel the greatest satisfaction in announcing it to you, in order that you may be good enough for the future to avoid any communication with the humble individual who bears it. I wish you a very good morning, sir !”

“ Good morning, sir !” said Jack. “ I certainly should have liked to shake hands with Anne.”

“ I assure you, sir, she is not well enough to risk any further interview,” said the doctor.

“ Well then, in course there ’s an end,” said Jack. “ Come, my lord—we’ll go. Good morning, sir !”

Saying which, infallible Jack crawled out of the room, followed by Lord Tom, who made a slight bow to the doctor.

“ Hadn’t we better go down the back-stairs,” said Jack ; “ it’s no use running the risk of meeting that fellow, Brown ; one can’t fight a serjeant.”

“ Fight whom ?” said Lord Tom.

“ Why,” said Jack, “ he never was anything but a serjeant.”

“ What !—learned in the law ?” said his lordship.

“ Club law, if any,” said Jack. “ No—a serjeant in a marching regiment.”

“ Why, I thought you told me he was a major in the army !” said Lord Tom.

“ So he was—serjeant-major,” said Jack, who, the moment he found himself despised and kicked out of his brother-in-law’s society, suddenly changed his ground, and tried to run down the man and his connexions whom, ten minutes before, he was ready to eulogize to the skies.

“ I should like very much to belong to his corps,” said Lord Tom ; “ it must be denced good pay for a serjeant to enable him to do what he does in the way of living. But—Jack—what do you mean to do next ? Do you mean to take any notice of what that Mr. Mead, or whatever his name is, said ?—it was not over-courteous, you know.”

“ No,” said Jack, “ but then I make allowances. I certainly did tantalize his poor little wife. I am a sad dog in that way. ’Pon my life ! it is more my misfortune than my fault.”

“ Yes,” said Lord Tom ; “ but then—some-how—however, it all depends upon feeling—only he decidedly turned you out of the room.”

“ Well, you know, my lord,” said Jack, “ he had a right to do that, because they pay for separate apartments, and in course I had no business there. If it had been really my sister, instead of another wife, you would have seen how I

should have acted : but, you see, she's gone ; — and — eh ! ”

“ Yes,” said Lord Tom, “ the gentleman was good enough to mention that fact.”

“ I didn't like to ask further particulars,” said Jack ; “ but it seems deuced strange that one shouldn't have heard of her death.”

“ Perhaps your mother has heard of it,” said Lord Tom ; “ only I suspect you are not a very constant correspondent of that worthy lady's.”

“ Maybe she has,” said Jack, evidently thinking as much as he could.

“ Do you mean to stay here ? ” said Lord Tom. “ I intended to have crossed to-morrow ; but I suppose it wouldn't be agreeable for you to go afloat with your newly-recovered connexions.”

“ Not exactly,” said Jack. “ Oh, in course, I shall stay here till you go : but I couldn't well have gone to-morrow anyhow, because I have engaged myself to pass one day, before we went over, with a friend at Walmer.”

“ What ; at the Castle ? ” said Lord Tom, making a face, invisible to Jack, whose real character began to develope itself rapidly.

“ No, no,” said Jack archly, “ nothing of that sort : all snug — fellow-passenger in the ‘ Union ’ — promises not to be broken : — mum ! — that's all right, and no mistake. I shall go over directly, and stay till to-morrow after — ”

“ — After ‘ The Ferret ’ starts for Calais,” said Lord Tom. “ You are right — peaceably disposed, and averse from collision. I'll wait for you ; only keep yourself all right for the Champ de Mars.”

“ Deuced odd name for a race-course, isn't it ? ” said Jack.

“ What's in a name ? ” said Lord Tom.

“ Not much,” said Jack. “ One would never fancy that pleasant gentleman up-stairs to be called Mead, from the sour way in which he talks.”

“ Oh, hang him ! ” said Lord Tom, who, foreseeing that if there was anything like a fight, he must inevitably be Jack's friend upon the occasion, lent himself entirely to his views of the subject, and acceded completely to his notion of terminating the affair peaceably. “ I should have nothing to do with any of them ; it is all what I call a tangle, and would take a deuced sight of trouble to unravel it : so start for Walmer, and I'll wait your return.”

It is impossible to describe the delight which Brag felt at this acquiescence on the part of his lordship in all his propositions ; nor was it long before he put his scheme in execution : and two o'clock found him strolling about upon the beach at Deal, having secured a bed-room at one of the worst inns in the place, the whole history of his promise and assignation with his “ Fanny of Timmel ” being, as the reader will naturally believe, a bright fiction of his own particular school.

It is scarcely necessary now to mention, that in the case of Dr. and Mrs. Mead "the course of true love *did* run smooth," since the doctor himself announced his marriage with Anne to Jack Brag; nor is it more necessary to eulogize the candour and single-mindedness on her part, to which he also referred, and which determined her to relate to her intended husband every circumstance connected with her intimacy with her early lover. They were united at St. George's, Hanover Square;—not because it is the church for matrimony *par excellence*, but because it happened to be the church of the parish in which Mead's house was located. They had started from town three days before, and were joined at Sittingbourne by the Browns, who, reducing the prescribed "treacle period," proposed as we have already seen accompanying them to Paris.

The evil star of Jack, however, was just now in the ascendant. It is true that his skilful and timely retreat to Walmer saved him from any inconvenience likely to arise from a meeting with Mr. George Brown; but it occasioned another calamity, which to him, even with all his prudence, was worse than the chance of being wounded in a rencounter with his injured brother-in-law;—but of this no more at present.

When Jack had finished his solitary dinner, and sipped his glass of grog—for in the house he had selected for his abode wine was wholly out of the question, he fell into a lengthened reflection upon his family affairs: he felt anxious to ascertain the real history of his sister's defection and fall, and to discover how the long-despised George had attained to wealth and importance such as he evidently possessed. The fortunate marriage of the neglected Anne equally puzzled him, and he resolved to while away the dull evening by writing his mother a letter, in which, giving a modified account of his discovery of the Browns, he might, as delicately as he could, ascertain the extent of his mother's knowledge touching Kitty. Of course, he could get no answer until he was in Paris, his desire of going to which place was by no means increased by the fact that the Meads and Browns were going thither also. It was, however, impossible to disappoint Lord Tom, who so entirely reckoned upon his riding, and he therefore consoled himself with the reflection that Paris was a large city, and that they should not stay there long; and that it was by no means impossible that he might not fall in with any of his connexions during his stay.

Then there came into his head a sort of question whether he ought to assume mourning for his departed relative; but, after a discussion with himself, he decided, that as she must have been dead for a considerable time, it would be ridiculous to begin to weep then; besides which, his appearance in a "suit of 'sables'" would naturally lead to questions which it would be neither agree-

able nor convenient for him to answer. He accordingly resolved upon saying nothing upon the subject, but upon writing, to hear the extent of the evil, from his respectable parent.

While all this was going on, a storm was brewing at Dover calculated to swamp the pretender upon his return and which was a splendid illustration of the saying, that "misfortunes never come alone." The reader will recollect the infelicitous *tête-à-tête* which Jack enjoyed at the sign of "The Duke of Marlborough" with the Earl of Ilfracombe: the sociable mutton-chop; the social glass of punch; with the pleasing episodes of Mr. Figg's horses, and the red-elbowed Rachel.

The reader will also recollect that the said Earl of Ilfracombe, the denounced "Kill-joy," was uncle to Lord Tom Towzle, his sister being Duchess of Ditchwater. It was quite clear that the event, and the statements of Jack of his great intimacy with Lord Tom, must form the special subject of conversation between the uncle and nephew whenever they met. It so happened that they had not met since this curious *rencontre* at "The Duke of Marlborough." Lord Ilfracombe, his wife and family, had gone to Brussels three or four days after that event; and, as if Old Nick had really set his cloven foot in it, actually arrived from the Continent on the morning following Jack's departure to Walmer, and before his return thence; a calamity—for such it proved to him—which would not have occurred, if he had not induced Lord Tom to postpone his passage until the next day, to suit his convenience and security as regarded other matters.

One of the principal morning recreations of Dover is the inspection of the passengers who land in the bay behind the pier, after the rolling and pitching which are so peculiarly the attributes of a voyage across the Channel from Calais: women pale and wan, (with their long ringlets all uncurled and limp, hanging adown their cheeks, enveloped in plaid cloaks,) brown cloaks, green cloaks, and sometimes soaked in fine silks and ermines, which their love of appearance has induced them to retain.—Men, with caps, and straps, and jerkins, and pea jackets, and Welsh wigs in every variety of deformity, scarce able to endure the tiresome assiduities of the "commissioners" from the different inns; some laden with leather hat-boxes, others with bags of sundry descriptions, and all looking sad, wan, and miserable. All these objects excite an interest, and often afford amusement; and, of course, when people can be amused and interested at so cheap a rate, the *spectacle* is always well attended.

To the scene of action strolled Lord Tom, after having witnessed the early departure of "The Ferret," with all Jack's tormentors; and as each boat-load left the newly arrived steamer, his eye vainly roamed in search of somebody he knew. At length, however, his

surprise and gratification were simultaneously excited by the appearance of Lord and Lady Ilfracombe, Lord and Lady Dawlish, and Lady Fanny Smartly, his lordship's cousin. The recognition and meeting were exceedingly agreeable, for Lord Tom, who was always on his best behaviour in the society of his maternal uncle, was a considerable favourite with his aunt and cousin. One of the most striking proofs of his desire to stand well with this branch of his family was the fact, that he had never thought proper to present or introduce his tiger Brag to any member of it; and although Jack, to whose ear their names and probably attributes, had grown familiar by hearing a great deal of them from Lord Tom, his practical and personal knowledge of them was—*nil*.

Lady Fanny was the first to recognise her cousin; and in a moment afterwards, pale, sick, and sad as Lady Ilfracombe and Lady Dawlish were, they "rallied all life's energies" to wave their hands in token of kind acknowledgment, looking more like a party under the care of Charon than of the jolly mortal boatmen, who cared no more for the wabbling of the waters than a fine lady does for an undisturbed rumble over a macadamized road.

They had intended to proceed direct to town, but the fatigue of the ladies, joined to the opportunity of passing a pleasant day with Lord Tom, induced them to change their design. The greetings and welcomings of the party were really true and genuine, for never was there a happier family, nor one whose whole delight centred more completely in the domestic pleasures of home. Lord Tom escorted Lady Ilfracombe and Lady Fanny; Lord Ilfracombe and his son were the supporters of Lady Dawlish; and so they ground their way, instep-deep, over the shingles—a walk said by experienced persons to be infinitely more tremendous than the treadmill for an equal space of time,—until they reached the wonted "Ship," and whither Lord Tom insisted upon their going, in opposition to Lord Ilfracombe, who, being the "sickest" of the party, was all for its rival, because it was nearer the landing-place, and because the landlord was most civil and obliging,—all of which character he deserves. But Lord Tom was to have his way, and so the party were as speedily as possible deposited at "The Ship," which, with all its splendour and all its gaiety, does not half so much cheer our hearts as it did when it was an humbler-looking house, full of comforts afforded in a different style—an attempt at splendour which never can reach the scale to which it pretends, is always a mistake. Take "The Fountains" at Canterbury as an example of perfect snugness without pretension. Recollect that a late noble earl, and prime minister, in his journeys to Walmer, always stopped to dine and sleep at "The Rose" at Sittingbourne, because it was excellent in his way, and perfectly different from the ordinary routine of his life; and recollect that in all its ap-

pointments and accessories, innkeepers who deal in tinsel and tawdry, in the hope of making their houses something like what their noble customers are used to, fail entirely: neat and clean are the qualities of an inn—grand and great, must be ridiculous.

Into "The Ship" scarcely had the Ilfracombe party been ushered, before breakfast was prepared for the voyagers, who, after the refreshments of the dressing-room, recovered themselves entirely, and proceeded to make up for any loss of appetite which they might have sustained on the water. Never did aristocratic party more revel in the *déjeuner à la fourchette* put down before them than these; and Lord Tom, who had already done breakfast the first, particularly well delighted at the opportunity afforded for the reunion, managed breakfast the second with infinite glee.

They were a family of love—Lord Tom avowedly the *roué*,—but still never betraying any of those symptoms which were likely either to excite the anxiety or displeasure of those members now present. They laughed, and talked; Lord Ilfracombe related many anecdotes of the *liberality* of the King of the Belgians—and some extraordinary traits of the *liberalism* of the King of the French;—discussed, in *his* way, the anomalous position of a monarch raised to a throne not his own by the clamour of a people, whose liberties he was subsequently obliged to restrain with greater rigour than had ever been attempted even in the time of their idol and tyrant Bonaparte; and the curious fact of his denunciation even unto the death, of the contrivers of barricades, by which barricades alone he had himself obtained the crown.

From these, and similar general subjects, his lordship glanced to the more domestic topics of Dover; and Lord Tom explained precisely his position there—his connexion with a gentleman whom they would see at dinner, Mr. Brag, and who was to be his lordship's companion to Paris for the purpose of riding his race.

"Why, then, you really *do* know Mr. Brag!" said Lord Ilfracombe.

"I do," said Lord Tom;—"but do *you*?"

The train was fired;—the fatal evil had occurred. Then it was that Lord Ilfracombe first had the opportunity of relating all that the reader already knows, about their meeting, etc.;—then it was that Lord Tom first became "wide awake" to the character of the tiger he had so long patronized:—and then it was he was resolved to give him a reception upon his return,

"More honoured in the breach than the observance,"

and kick him soundly for the insolent falsehoods he had dared to utter even to the face of their object. One thing alone interfered to prevent this obvious manifestation of his contempt—and that was,

the debt, which he could not but acknowledge, but which, alas ! he could not pay.

Lord Ilfracombe, instead of being the "Killjoy" described by Brag, was a remarkably agreeable person, and, more than most people, ready to enter into a joke. Before Brag's arrival, he entertained Lord Tom, instead of taking the matter up seriously, to punish the pretender by allowing him to join the party as usual, to permit him gradually to become acquainted with the ladies, whom he might not remember, and conclude the evening by making a matter of jest of that which could produce no satisfactory result if treated in any grave manner.

"At the same time, Tom," said the earl, "I honestly confess, for your own sake,—let him down as you may—the easier the better,—I *do* think you ought to get rid of him,—if after the Paris races, well and good : but you have no idea how ready the world is to attribute motives. This little man is of use to *you*, because he is little, and rides light ; but—*le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle*. Pay a jockey, and let him ride—but do not make him an associate ; do not give him the power of gossiping about your relations, as this little man did to me. You cannot pay *him*, and therefore he must, if he ride, take it out 'in kind,' as the clergy have it."

Lord Tom agreed with every word said by his noble uncle, even to the assertion that he could not pay Jack. This was the crisis fatal to Brag.

"My dear uncle," said Lord Tom, "will you forgive what I am going to tell you ?"

"Anything, Tom," said his lordship. "I am not hard-hearted."

"I admit to you," said Lord Tom, "that recent events have opened my eyes to the character of this man. Last night he exposed himself in a house to which I had the credit of taking him. I have got a letter from town this morning, which gives me the whole account of his incalculable insolence in making offers to two ladies, sisters, who, both in joke, accepted him."

"Mrs. Dallington and Miss Englefield," said Lord Ilfracombe, "I presume."

"My dear uncle, how in the name of wonder, do you know anything about it ?" said Lord Tom.

"Your exemplary friend himself," replied the earl, "told me the whole story of their devotion to him, with their names and places of residence, at the very moment in which he was spanning the by no means taper waist of the barmaid of the alehouse."

"You don't mean *that* !" said Lord Tom.

"How else could I possibly have known it ?" said the earl.

"Rely upon it, he is to be discarded."

"Well then," said Lord Tom, "I must come to the fact :—I owe the fellow four hundred pounds. The law of primogeniture

my dear uncle, make us, Lord Toms, Lord Johns, and Lord Bobs, anything but rich ; and we *are* consequently run sometimes to do things of which, upon sober reflection, we are seriously ashamed :—now there's the truth—he volunteered upon all occasions, and I, like a fool, accepted his proffered accommodation."

"The city men say," said Lord Ilfracombe, "'accept anything, except a bill:' however, Tom, I have been young myself. I will get you out of the difficulty. Mr Brag may ride your horses ; but although you may be saddled by others, he shall not ride *you*. You shall have the money ; you shall Fectorize him this very day. But I'll have no quarrelling—I will have it all my own way. I dined with him at the small inn—he shall dine with us at a large one ; and if I have not my revenge out of him, I shall be astonished. If he had denounced me as a seducer, a murderer, or even a Whig, I could have borne it all ; but when he called me to my face a "Kill-joy," and a "wet blanket," it was too bad. Let him come ; let us have him to dine, and I will instruct the other members of our little family community to play their parts. But not one word of those whom he is to meet, till we have him in our meshes."

"My dear uncle, you are too good to me," said Lord Tom.

"Not a bit of it," said the earl. "There are a set of underbred fellows in the world, who swagger and strut about, because by some accident, sometimes as little honourable or decent to themselves as may be, they have got hold of money, which they as little deserve as they had any right to expect—who fancy, because, from their very insignificance, they have shuffled, screwed, or pushed themselves into society to which they ought not to belong, they are to mount upon their money-bags into yet higher places ; and who, exactly in proportion to their natural meanness and original insignificance, perk up their noses and toss their heads, to give them a consequence, which makes them insufferably odious to the people with whom they really *do* live, and incalculably ridiculous to those with whom they never can live, let them try as much as they may. This man Brag is one of that class, and it will be a very slight punishment for his immeasurable insolence to get rid of him after our own fashion. So, come along ; we'll to Fector's : you shall have the money, and we will eject your familiar in the civillest and most amiable imaginable manner : *that* part of the affair you will leave to *me* ; the discharge of the debt remains with *you*."

The letter which Lord Tom had received from Rushton himself, describing the outrageous conduct of Jack, and its merited results, went so far to convince him that Brag was neither more nor less than a disgrace, that his first impulse, on his return to Dover, would no doubt have been to put him on his defence, as far as that affair went ; but clogged as he had hitherto been with the debt, it would have ended in a laugh-off or a qualification ; and however

much convinced he might have been of the unworthiness, not to call it insanity, of his conduct, they would have continued their route to Paris, and their subsequent connexion. Now, armed with the means of vindicating his character by the abandonment of such an associate, Lord Tom felt himself doubly braced by the breeze, as he and his uncle left the door of the bank, his lordship having the amount of his debt to Jack safely lodged in the sinister pocket of his lordship's trowsers.

The events of the day remain to be told.

CHAPTER XIII.

LITTLE did Brag suspect that a pit so deep as that, which Lord Ufracombe proposed, was digging for him during his forced absence from his noble friend Lord Tom; still less indeed, did he anticipate the arrival of that noble Earl, which full as he naturally must be of the history of the dreadful luncheon, if he had imagined it possible, would have satisfied him that the last explosion was at hand. The truth is, that being ignorant of any such facts, and innocent of any such anticipation, Jack's thoughts were fully occupied in reflections upon the still unexplained fate of his sister Kitty, the worldly advancement of George Brown, and the evidently advantageous marriage of Anne.

In the confusion of his ideas as to the causes of this advancement and these advantages, and a sort of compunctious visiting in the shape of a recollection of the manner in which he had treated and talked of the woman whom he once fancied he loved, who certainly had loved him, and whom he now as certainly had lost, Jack passed no pleasant time. The weather was stormy, and although it might have

“—suited the present temper of his mind,”

it was by no means so agreeable in its congeniality as “the rocking of the battlements” was to the sable hero of Dr. Young.

Time, however, as we all know, will go—although as Shakespeare says, he hath many different paces,—still he keeps going, and after Jack had finished his two glasses of grog, and folded and sealed his letter to his mother, (which he proposed slipping into the post himself the next morning in order that nobody in the inn might see the direction), he rang the bell in order that he might—

“To keep his spirits up
By pouring spirits down—”

desire the waiter to bring him some more hot brandy and water.

No waiter came to answer the summons; the lout who had previously attended him having gone to the stable; but, instead of that attendant there appeared before him a sylph-like creature, who seemed to have descended from some other sphere to do his bidding—the very Hebe of waiting-maids—a girl as fair, and as modest in her deportment as if she had just stepped from the threshold of the nunnery. “Acasto’s dear remains” could not have been more interesting—her face lovely, her flaxen locks inartificially falling about her ears—her innocent blue eyes cast down upon the floor, and her cheeks suffused with blushes such as tint the opening rose of future whiteness.

Jack was at once confounded, delighted, frightened and amazed: his first impression was, that it was a mistake—that the plainly yet gracefully dressed creature he saw before him was, like himself, a visiter at the inn, and that she had either in mistake, or because she had seen him in the course of the day, entered his room. Don Quixote himself was not more prone to the exaltation of his “loves” than Jack: he gazed, he doubted—rubbed up his hair—pulled up his collar, and was going to try to say something, when Fanny Martin, (such was her name,) saved him the trouble by asking him if he rang?

“I ring!” said Jack, “yes,—yes. I rang that is—eh!—I beg your pardon—do you?—eh!—

“What did you please to want, sir?” said Fanny.

“I rang for the waiter,” said Jack.

“Tom only stops in the house till eight, sir,” said Fanny; “I can get you what you want.”

“Umph,” said Jack, “that’s—eh!—well—I’m sorry to give you the trouble,—a glass of hot brandy and water—if you please.”

Fanny curtsied, retired, and shut the door.

Jack’s head was gone—turned, twisted,—what could it mean?—never was such a pretty creature,—what was she—bar-maid, house-maid, chamber-maid—what? It was a bright vision,—it was something to love;—for, upon Moore’s principle, (and Jack had done more in the way of advances, however ill the combats eventually turned out, by the aid of a smattering familiarity with the mischievous beauties of that bewitching poet than anything else)

“’T were a shame when flowers around us rise

To make light of the rest, if the rose be not there;

And the world’s so rich in resplendent eyes

’T were a pity to limit one’s love to a pair.

“Love’s wing and the Peacock’s are nearly alike,

They are both of them bright, but they’re changeable too;

And wherever a new beam of beauty can strike,

It will tincture love’s plume with a different hue.

"Then, oh! what pleasure, wherever we rove,
To be doom'd to find something that still is dear;
And to know, when far from the lips we love,
We have but to make love to the lips that are near."

This is a faith almost as convenient and elastic as that of Popery, although vulgarised down by Jack to the practical siege of a chamber-maid at Deal some degrees superior, however, to the red-elbowed Rachel of the Duke's Head, who, as we have already seen, did most unequivocally reject his "delicate attentions."

And there was besides a history, of which Fanny Martin was the heroine,—a history that everybody in Deal knew, and which made everybody who knew her modest demeanour and excellent character very solicitous for her welfare. But she shall speak for herself—poor girl! she is but humble. Let us hope—we say no more—that the gaiety and sprightliness of our hero may have no ill effect upon her peace of mind, or the excellence of her character.

Jack, when she left the room, was, as we have seen, what he called "topped over."—"Why, bless my soul!" he mentally ejaculated,—that is, said to himself,—“Nancy Brown never was like *that*—Blanche—psha!”—(be it remembered that the ale and grog in which he had solitarily indulged, mixed with his grief and anxieties, had dreadfully fermented.) Miss Englefield—what's a Miss!—what indeed—she's amiss—Mrs. Dallington—two fools—eh!—made me a laughing-stock. What's the sincerity of that—young Gunnersbury—beast!—hate him—deuce take that old lord with the snuff-box yesterday—The brig—psha! Lovely creature this—must have a talk with *her*—eyes—hair—eh! I hope Brown is gone—ah—foolish—how could he have got that money? Poor Anne—eh—did like her once—Walworth—mud—fog—squash—nonsense, couldn't—Old mother mad—deuce take Waterloo Bridge—hate Lord Tom—wish he'd pay me my money—don't like going to Paris—meet Nancy. Hope the farmer has given up his action about the trespass at the steeple chase—eh,—never left direction for the attorney. Hang that old Ilfracombe—Tom's uncle—made a fool of myself there—beast Figgs and the horses. Want money to carry on the war. What happened to Kitty—all wrong, I suppose. What a noise the wind makes!—bore being at sea. She's a long time coming—think she was hit—saw her look—innocent—eh! Well—ah—that's all right and no mistake. Three Mackerels—comb and night-cap;—deuce of a bore—dirty monster—eh!—wonder who the people were standing all about—Tom never said a word. Mrs. Carnaby—eh!—don't know—pretty woman—poor Carnaby! Well—I wonder if they go to Paris! Old fool, Lady Gunnersbury! Wonder if Lydiard will be married soon. Wretched wet night—good-natured slavey to offer the cab. Oh!—they may all go to Nycko. Where is this fair—eh!—creature. Oh—”

This half-whispered, half-thought soliloquy was scarcely ended, when Fanny re-appeared with the glass of hot brandy and water : this she deposited upon the table, and was about to retire.

"I say," said Jack, "stop a minute,—just shut the door."

"I can't stop, sir," said Fanny.

"I only want just to say three words to you," said Jack.

"Well, sir," said Fanny, "I can hear them as well with the door open, as shut."

"Yes, so can anybody else," said Jack.

"I'm sure, sir," said the girl, looking all modesty, "you would not want to say anything to *me* that everybody in the house mightn't hear."

"No," said Jack, "only the draft of air from the door, you know, is likely to give one cold. I really want just to ask you—a question or two."

"Oh, sir," said Fanny, "I'll shut to the door, if you wish it, only I can't stop a minute."

"Tell me," said Jack, essaying to take her hand, which she gently withdrew, "what the deuce does it mean?"

"What, sir?" said Fanny.

"Why, don't you twig?" said Jack. "What the deuce brings such a sweet, lovely creature as you, into such a place as this?"

"My good fortune, sir," said Fanny.

"Your good fortune," said Jack, "I should think that you might better your fortune if you chose."

"No, sir," said Fanny; "my father was a native of this place, and so was my mother : he was lost at sea, and my mother is dead. I was an orphan, one of four, and my mistress has been a mother to me ever since : I am quite happy where I am, and very grateful for her kindness."

"You are a regular angel," said Jack. "I meant to have gone away to-morrow; but now I have seen you I'm not sure I shall ever go away—at least without you."

"The longer you stay the better, sir," said Fanny with a smile, which had scarcely left her pretty countenance, before she quitted the room and shut the door.

That smile convinced him that his never-failing qualities of person and conversation had triumphed, and that the fair orphan was all at once, heart and soul devoted to him; and it was at this moment he began to repent his positive engagement to Lord Tom for the next day, to which, as his ruminations have already informed us, he began to grow somewhat disinclined upon other considerations.

A nervous anxiety to see and have the opportunity of again speaking to the really beautiful girl, induced Jack to ring his bell very soon after he had finished his brandy and water, and desire to be shown to his bed-room;—it was then about half-past ten

o'clock. The sylph came—gave him his candle—attended him to his chamber, and there underwent a certain degree of vulgar persecution in the way of very marked attentions, from which she contrived to escape, not—as a faithful historian, I am bound to say—without the undesired gain of one single kiss from Jack, which was so hastily given and so seriously repulsed, that it remains doubtful whether it fell upon the cheek which the attempt had brightened into a beautiful blush, or upon a depending curl which hung clustering inartificially over it. Probably Crispissa

“——tended her favourite lock,”

and the presence of Ariel was scarcely needed, since Fanny felt no “shock.”

Jack, however, did not see the door close or hear the retreating footsteps of the delicate hand-maiden, without, as usual, satisfying himself that he had settled *that* point, and that if it were not for the provoking necessity of going to Dover in the morning, he should, in a very short time, be the favoured of all the admirers which so sweet a “creechur” must necessarily possess.

Full of these new thoughts, which, as his small mind had not room for many, naturally expelled all the other previous occupants, Jack “turned in,” as the sailors say, and tossed and tumbled about, not much soothed or composed by the various noises incidental to a minor inn at Deal during a blowing night. The impending morrow now was viewed by him with double dismay, since he had discovered a new attractive power where he was; and as for the meekness or modesty of anybody in *that* station, *that* was all a regular mistake.

Jack had been deposited horizontally for about an hour, with something like an expectation of an accidental “look in” of Fanny to see after his candle, or upon some other little errand to which she might have been excited by his never-failing attractions, when, just as he was dropping off into a slumber, the result of exhaustion of thought, Jack, to his infinite delight, but not surprise, heard a gentle delicate noise at his chamber door, not very much unlike

“The woodpecker tapping the hollow beech tree.”

The sound roused him in a moment: he sat up in bed—saw the glimmering of a light through the key-hole, and in one of those half impeded whispers, in which gentlemen under such circumstances sometimes express themselves, said “Who’s there?”

“Me, sir,” was the response uttered in the sweet voice of the gentle Fanny.

“Come in,” said Jack, still more effectually subduing his voice, “come in.”

The pretty rustic obeyed the call, and stood before him with a light in her hand, more lovely to *his* eyes than ever.

"You are a dear soul," said Jack, ten thousand ideas rushing at once into his imagination, which as I have just said was not calculated to hold more than one at a time,—“you are come, are you—what is it?—eh!—”

"Why, sir," said Fanny blushing, and looking modestly down at the candle she carried, "I'm sure I beg pardon, sir,—but—could you spare half your bed to-night?"

"Spare!" said Jack, sitting bolt upright, conscious that he had not overrated the power of his fascination,—“do you doubt it?—spare!—to be sure—to be sure—all right and no mistake.”

"That's all right indeed, sir," said Fanny, "because, sir, here is Mr. Van Slush Harridick, a North-Sea trader, just arrived, wet to the skin, who hasn't been in bed for three weeks, sir, and we should have had no other place whatever to put him in to-night, if you had not been so good as to say 'yes.'"

"Mr. Van what?" said Jack, in an agony.

"Van Slush Harridick," was replied in the hoarse gruff voice of a man six feet four in height, and four feet six in circumference, dressed in a well-saturated pea jacket and dreadnought trousers, who followed the girl into the room the moment the permission was granted;—"And I dank you var moech, zir, vor de commodation: I zleeps zound, and znoces not."

"What does all this mean?" said Jack,—“I don't understand.”

"But I too," said Van Slush Harridick;—"Vanny ask for half de ped,—you zay yez—wot vor now you zay no. I aff not zlept dry vor dese dree weeks von vay and doder, and I zshall drop to my znoodle like a dop."

"Like a what, sir?" said Jack.

"A dop," said the giant.—“Zo, Vanny, get up my bipe, and my pag, and my pacco, and my prandy and vaterz, for bleaze de bigs I mill haf a buff and a zwig pefore I durns in.”

"Do *you* mean to say, sir," said Jack, "that you propose to share my bed?"

"Doo be zure I too," said Harridick, "Vanny asked you; if no?—if yez?—you zaid yez—zo here gose."

Saying which Harridick began to disencumber himself of some part of his drapery, Fanny having previously obeyed his orders about his pipe, and his bag, and his brandy and water. Brag sat up and reconnoitred the giant, who was shaking his jacket and preparing to make "snug for the night." Having scanned the size and power of his companion, his next step was out of his comfortable nest.

"Dat's right," said Harridick; "go if you like, and leaf it all do me,—I'm not do be drifted mid."

Finding remonstrance hopeless and resistance impossible, Jack huddled on his clothes in the corner, and when Fanny returned with the North-Sea trader's little comforts, he was prepared to announce to her his determination of giving up the whole of the accommodation to the newly arrived guest, and passing the night upon the short horse-hair sofa which stood in his sitting-room—an announcement which, in order to convince both the maid and the trader that he was not terrified into a removal, he made to the former in the civilest possible manner.

"I'm zorry do durn you out, my vrend," said Harridick; "you are bot a liddle yellow, and dere voud haf been blenty of room for poth of os."

"You are extremely welcome," said Jack; "in course if you have not been in bed for three weeks, it must be of much greater consequence to *you* than *me*;—so—Fanny dear, give me a light, and I'll make myself as snug as I can down stairs."

"Coot night, coot night, my liddle vrend," said Harridick; "I'll too as moch vor you menever you are apoard mein prig in de Nord Zea."

"I wish with all my heart and soul you were there now," said Jack to himself. "Good night, sir,—come, light me down, Fanny."

Accordingly Fanny did as she was bid, and Jack found himself again deposited in his sitting-room. Here he enquired whether he could have a cloak or two, a blanket, or a covering of some kind, to protect him from the chilliness of the night; and his request was answered by the landlady in person, who in bringing up several articles of warm clothing, expressed her regret that he should have been so inconvenienced.

"Why," said Jack, "I must say, to *me*, used as in course I am to every sort of luxury and comfort, it is rather hard; but the gentleman—is tired—and so—"

"Yes, sir," said the landlady, "but he should not have interfered with you, only you gave him leave, as my maid tells me, to share your accommodation: indeed, it was Fanny who first thought of asking you; for says she to me, 'Mam,' says she, 'the London gentleman is so very little, there 'll be plenty of room for Mr. Harridick;' and all our other beds, you see, sir, is quite full."

"I am much obliged to Fanny for the notion," said Jack; "I certainly did not think—I—however—"

"Oh, sir," said the landlady, "if it hadn't been with your own consent, nobody should have put you out of your room. I'm sure I hope you won't catch cold, or feel any other ill-convenience by sleeping here—and I'm humbly obliged to you for your consideration:—will you take anything, sir, before you settle yourself?"

"Don't care if I do," said Jack, "a glass of brandy and water,

same as the last,—hot, strong, and sweet, eh!—I'm 'deuced shivery."

"I'll send it you directly, sir," said the landlady, quite delighted at having so far soothed her guest—"Good night, sir."

"Good night," said Jack. Casting his eyes round the room, which looked as cheerless as might be; and having reflected for three or four minutes upon the consequences likely to result from his own estimate of his lady-killing qualities, a gentle tap at the door announced that

———"the drink was ready."

"Come in," said Jack—and again appeared before him the gentle Fanny with a smoking tumbler of the desired beverage, which she deposited on the table.

"So, Miss Fanny," said Jack, "it was you who foisted that sea-monster upon me, was it?"

"Sea-monster! sir," said Fanny.

"Yes, Mr. Harridick, as you call him," said Jack.

"He is no monster, sir," said Fanny, "but a very kind-hearted gentleman, and one of my mistress's best customers."

"I didn't think you would play me such a trick as that," said Jack, looking tenderly and plaintively at the girl:—"the only thing you can do by way of compensation is, to come and sit with me for an hour or two, and tell me all your own history—eh!—and then I'll make it up with you, smack smooth, and no mistake."

"Sit up! sir," said Fanny—"Lord bless you! sir—why, it's just twelve o'clock: we are all in bed here by twelve. I sleep with my mistress, and she's waiting for me now."

"I say, Fanny," said Brag, somewhat emphatically—

"Come, Fanny—Fanny," said a voice outside the half-open door, and which Jack recognised as that of the landlady.

"Coming, ma'am," replied the girl—"coming this minute. Good night, sir!"

"Good night!" said Jack, in a subdued tone.

The girl retired, the door closed; and the last sound Jack heard was a duet of suppressed laughter performed in the passage by the maid and the mistress, in which the voice of the former considerably predominated.

There are sounds to which men sometimes love to shut their ears; Jack, however, could not muster up a sufficient stock of dyseceæ to answer his purpose. What could they be laughing at?—at the sea-monster perhaps, thought Jack; there was nothing else ridiculous, that he could discover; and so in no very good humour the little man rolled himself up for the night in a boat-cloak which evidently had not long been home from a voyage.

In the morning everything was naturally as uncomfortable as

anything well could be, and Jack, looking about wistfully for his *valise*, began sorely to repent that he had not taken up his abode at "The Three Kings," or some of the more substantial inns of the place, where he would certainly not have been subjected to such an intrusion and expulsion as those which he had so incautiously brought upon himself. Having got up, just as he lay down, he rang the bell, and enquired whether he should be able to use his last night's room for dressing; to which Fanny, the cruel fair, replied in the affirmative—that Mr. Harridick was up, and coming down almost directly, and she would just "put the things a little to rights," and let Jack know when it was ready.

There was nothing in all this, to soothe or console our hero, who could not divest himself of that nervous, aching, sinking feeling, which seems almost miraculously to announce the falling of some heavy blow. He could not account for the sensation, except indeed that with the day had come upon him the reflection, that, besides making himself extremely uncomfortable during the night, he had made himself rather ridiculous into the bargain. However, a few hours would extricate him from his worries; he would be cracking his jokes under the patronage of Lord Tom; and as for the North-Sea trader, as he had, under an erroneous impression, given him permission to accommodate himself, it was much better to concede the point upon an assumed principle of good-nature and consideration, than get into any personal altercation with a man whose place in society could not easily be defined.

While he was congratulating himself upon the success of his diplomacy, a knock at the door, louder than that in which the gentle Fanny announced her presence, startled him; and the permission "Come in" being uttered, the door opened, and Mr. Slush Van Harridick presented himself to Jack's astonished eyes.

"Good mornin do you," said Harridick; "I ope you zlept mell."

"Good morning, sir," said Jack:—"slept like a top, as you say—warm, snug, and comfortable; couldn't be better; all smack smooth, and no mistake."

"I only looked in," said the trader, "joost do dell you dat de zea-monster has done tressing, and your room is at your zervice—eh—dat is all. And now, liddle man, de zea-monster is going to git his prakfast."

Saying which, Harridick shut the door, and calmly walked away, singing a lide of a popular Dutch song, which sounded most discordant to Jack's ears, who was now perfectly satisfied that every word which he had, as he thought privately and confidentially whispered to Fanny, had been by *her* communicated to his ursine rival; and that in escaping the vengeance of Scylla Brown at Dover, he had run into still greater peril by having offended Charybdis

Harridick at Deal, and so got himself, according to his own phraseology, "out of the frying-pan into the fire."

Shaftesbury says :—"The passion of fear (as a modern philosopher informs me) determines the spirits of the muscles of the knees, which are instantly ready to perform their motion by taking up the legs with incomparable celerity, in order to remove the body out of harm's way." Now although it would be unfair and unjust to attribute to any apprehension of consequences, on the part of Mr. Brag, the resolution at which he suddenly arrived, of not stopping any longer where he was, and the immoveable determination he made to depart forthwith; certain it is that he did so resolve and determine, upon the ground that he had been ill-used, imposed upon, turned out of his bed, and generally outraged by the mistress of the house and her handmaiden.

Accordingly Brag, when he had finished his toilette, or, as he generally pronounced it, "twilight," rang the bell and ordered his bill, giving at the same time a negative to the question if he would have breakfast served. The tone in which this negative was given, and the dignified air which accompanied it satisfied poor Fanny that her day of influence was over; and when the account was produced and paid, with the smallest possible gratuity for herself, Brag, boiling with rage and indignation, qualified in a certain degree by his anxiety to escape any farther parley with Harridick, quitted the house, bearing in his hand the valise in which his cap, comb, and the rest of his portable comforts for one day's use had been stowed.

Thus loaded, he emerged from the lane in which, for the benefit of the sea-view (his room facing the street) he had immured himself, and walked on to "The Three Kings," where enquiring the hour at which the first coach to Dover would start, he ordered breakfast, having first asked whether the waiter had seen Mr. Brag's servant anywhere about.

Of course the man said no—inasmuch as servant there was none.

"Then," said Brag, "I have no doubt he drove on last night: never mind, the coach will do."

Jack, whatever might have been the real source of his anxiety to quit his late residence, felt comparatively happy in his new *locale*. The house was a good one; there was an air of cleanliness and cheerfulness about it; the weather was fine, the sun shone brightly, and his happiness was complete, when, as the waiter was putting down the breakfast, he replied to the question, "What steamer is that smoking in the distance?"—"The Dover boat, sir, for Calais."

"To-day's paper, sir," said the waiter, presenting a copy of "The Dover Telegraph."

"Thank you!" said Jack, with a princely affability of manner,

and forthwith he began his morning meal, alternately cutting, spreading, sweetening, pouring out, and reading, with a mind perfectly at ease. A new cloud, however, rose on the horizon, which threatened the neutralization of the delight which he had just received from the distant smoke of "The Ferret," in the shape of the following account of the grounding of the brig at the back of the pier, which stared him in the face in large letters under the head of "Local News."

"The night before last, the brig Rose, from Falmouth to this port, missed the entrance of the harbour, owing to the strength of the gale, and got on shore at the back of the pier. Great apprehensions were entertained for her safety: three of the crew swam on shore, but were severely injured on the shingles by the sea, which ran so high that no assistance could be offered her. About half-past nine a communication was made with the brig by means of a hawser. Lieutenant Brunt, of the royal navy, who happened to be on the spot, seized the first moment to dash through the surf, and at the imminent hazard of his life succeeded in bringing ashore two female passengers, a lady and her daughter, who, by the occasional gleams of moonlight were discernible lashed to one of the masts of the vessel, making signs of distress and supplication. This is the second instance in which Lieutenant Brunt has signalled himself in a similar manner. Three men have been unfortunately lost, but as the weather has moderated, it is thought the brig may be ultimately got off."

"There's a go," said Jack to himself,—*"I wish we had been off to France yesterday—now that's clear contradiction to my story—I saw him do it—didn't look like a lieutenant—pooh!—deuce take it—that's bad again—no sooner out of one scrape than into another."* In fact, Jack, like all pretenders, was perpetually dancing the tight rope in constant fear of a tumble. In the present case his fate was certain, for there were but two female passengers on board the brig, and but one man on shore to save both.

Perhaps Lord Tom might not see the paper, or, if he did, might not read the account of the brig; at all events, it was no use discounting misadventures: when they came due, if they were presented, or presented themselves, it was time enough to meet them:—and so Jack read the sporting news, and the London news, and finished his breakfast. Having discovered that the coach would be up in a few minutes, his old failing overcame him.

"Waiter," said Jack.

"Yes, sir."

"Does the coach, in going through Walmer go near the Castle?" said Jack.

"Passes the end of the road leading down to it sir," said the man.

"Oh!" said Jack, affecting to consider, "I must go to Dover

first, but I think my man may have taken the phaeton direct to Walmer."

"Oh, sir," said the waiter, at once impressed, as Jack meant he should be, with the idea that he was going on a visit to the Castle, "I dare say the coachman would stop while somebody ran down and enquired."

"No, no," said Jack, "it does not signify, if he is not there, he has probably gone through to Dover himself,—it will be all right in the end, and no mistake."

In a few moments the coach drove up; the instant it stopped, the waiter, anxious to be most active in the service of the guest, whose destination he flattered himself he had discovered, ran into the room to inform him that one of the duke's servants, who had come from the Castle early in the morning, was going back, and would, perhaps, be able to give some information on the subject.

This was a staggerer.

"No, no," said Jack, "he could not know, because I did not expect my man so soon—no,—no—never mind."

Jack's distress when he beheld, during the packing of some parcels into the boot of the coach, the said waiter in close conversation with the aforesaid servant, may well be imagined; and the fact that the aforesaid servant occupied an outside place, rendered it absolutely necessary, in order to avoid any farther explanation, that Jack himself should proceed, inside. He accordingly enquired if there were room, and was answered in the affirmative. In he jumped, valise and all, having the whole interior of the coach, entirely to himself. In a few minutes he was again in motion, the coachman having received directions to take up one, at "The Standard."

Jack did not feel himself at all at his ease about his last effort at dignity:—his name he had given—the total absence of servant or equipage might lead to further enquiries and discoveries, and he got more deeply involved in intricacies and embarrassments. However,

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast,"

and Jack still fancied something more agreeable might turn up in his little journey. The passenger to be taken up at the Standard might be one of the female sex, who by her kindness and sociability might make amends for the treachery of Fanny and the incivility of her mistress. There was even yet a chance of an adventure—of some event which, if it came off, triumphantly, might weigh in the opposite scale against his defeats and discomfitures.

As the coach rattled along, towards Walmer, Jack took all his customary precautions of running his fingers through his curls, pulling up his shirt collar, and setting himself generally in order,

so that, when the vehicle stopped at the corner where the roads divide, he was all prepared for conquest. Open went the door, down went the steps, and Jack, longing as he was to behold his coming victim, considered it more becoming his dignity to affect a perfect indifference, and therefore kept his eyes filled with an expression of military interest towards the gates of the Barrack-yard, until he felt the inclination of the carriage to the weight of the entering passenger, when, turning carelessly "as it were" round to meet, as he hoped, the responsive glance of some Walmer beauty, he beheld squeezing himself into the narrow-door of the coach, enveloped in an immensely thick great coat, his dread and abomination, Mr. Sluys Van Harridick.

Jack then thought that his measure of calamities was full, even to overflowing.

"Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
The arm'd rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan tiger,
Take any shape but that"—

said Macbeth, and thought John Brag, Esq.—What! had he way-laid him to revenge himself for the insults offered him? or was he doomed to his society to Dover by mere accident?—what was it?—

"Ah!" cried Harridick, the moment he had succeeded in establishing himself in possession of nearly three-fourths of the coach; "Vot! here agin,—vy I dought you vas gone—I no zee you to prakfast—here is your zea monster come do dravel mid you to Tover."

"I'm delighted," said Jack, looking parsnips.

"I spect do vind my prig at Tover," said Harridick, who seemed by his manner either not to comprehend the compliment of being called a sea monster, in the full acceptance of the words, or to treat the intended affront of his companion with sovereign contempt,—"I lantet at Teal because I like Teal,—I haf known de lantlaty vor dventy years, ant her hosbond befor her—zo I always gets ashore dere—to get my znooze, and leaf my mate do get de prig into de harbor."

"Oh!" said Jack, "then you stay at Dover while the brig is there."

"Do be zure I too," said Harridick, "and alldow I am zea monster, I zshall be doo happy do zee you on poard and plow you out mid znaps."

"You are very kind, sir," said Jack, still doubting whether he was in earnest in his civility, or indeed, whether being "blown out with snaps" meant anything hospitable and civil, or exactly the reverse.

"As ve are alone," said Harridick, "I zuppoze you mill haf no hopjecksion do my avving a whiff. I haf no bipe, bot I aff

ghiroots mid amadow do light him mid—mill you aff von, mid me?"

"No," said Jack; "none, I thank you :—but, pray do you smoke if you like."

"I mean do too zo," said Sluys, opening a box of particularly fine cigars, striking a light, and methodically beginning his exercise, to the utter confusion of Jack, who knew that by the time he should arrive at "The Ship," he should be awfully redolent of the fumes of tobacco, before noon.

At this moment the coach stopped to set down the Duke's servant, who, having been informed by the waiter that the little gentleman with the visionary servant and imaginary phaeton seemed to be going to the Castle, came to the window, touched his hat, and asked whether he should say anything to his man if the carriage had arrived there.

"No," said Jack, "thank you—no—I shall be back by dinner-time—if I can get back in time—I—"

"His grace isn't here, sir," said the servant; "only if—"

"No, no," said Jack, "I know—no, no—it's of no consequence; I dare say my man is gone on to Dover—thank you—much obliged to you."

The servant again touched his hat, and retired. "All's right" was the word, and away went the happy couple of "insides."

It was, it must be confessed, a great comfort, or, as Jack would have called it, "an 'appy release," that Harridick, who had not during the night sufficiently

"Unfatigued himself with gentle slumbers,"

still felt drowsy; so that, ere the tip of his first cigar had faded into ashy paleness, he had himself subsided into a nap, which greatly relieved his companion from his apprehensions with regard to consequences, and left him luckily in ignorance of the name of his "prig," to which otherwise he might have felt himself bound to pay a visit. The nap continued until they reached the turning near Dover Castle, when Brag stopped the coach, and indicated his desire to walk down into the town by the short cut, ordering the coachman to send his valise into "The Ship" as soon as he arrived. By this manœuvre Jack contrived to escape from the caravan without waking the bear, and without farther cementing an acquaintance with one from whom, the moment his dread and apprehension of him were overcome, he entertained the most unqualified aversion.

Away bounded Jack, along the side of the hill, until, carefully avoiding "The Three Mackerels," he cut through the intervening streets, and *vid* Snargate reached his inn, where his first enquiries were naturally directed as to the position of Lord Tom: Lord Tom was on the pier. Of course, or, as Jack had it, "in course,"

thither Jack repaired; and, sure enough, there he found his lordship, amidst a crowd of persons of all sorts and conditions, who were anxiously watching the process of warping off the unfortunate brig, of which we have already heard so much.

Jack was rather sorry that the brig—or, as Sluys Von Harri-dick would have called it, “the prig”—was the leading object of the day, inasmuch as it might lead to a discussion with the young lord as to the paragraph, which had caught his eye, at Deal. However, Jack proceeded to join his lordship, who was leaning over the parapet between two ladies utterly unknown to our hero.

“Ah, Jack!” said Lord Tom, in a tone not quite like that which Jack had been used to—“so, you are come back. ‘The Ferret’ is gone—eh!”

“I know, my lord,” said Jack.

“You are just in time,” said his lordship:—“this must be a most interesting sight for *you*. Why, it could have been no easy work to get abroad that unfortunate craft by a hawser in the gale of the night before last.”

“No,” said Jack, “I never said it was. The rope was as slippery as an eel; and I’m sure, now I look at it, I wonder how the deuce it was done, only when a man makes up his mind, he don’t stick at trifles.” The reader will please to observe that Jack’s tone was somewhat altered—he now put the case hypothetically.

“I suppose,” said Lord Tom, “you mean to enquire after the ladies whom you rescued; rely upon it, they will not be ungrateful.”

“Not I,” said Jack, “I leave all that to fate. I’m satisfied with having done my little all; I never make mountains of mole-hills,”

“Then,” said Lord Tom, “I positively declare you do yourself the greatest possible injustice, and I will not be so careless a friend as to suffer you to ‘hide your candle under a bushel.’”

“My what!” said Jack in an agony. The shop—the moulds, the sixes and tens, all blazing at once in his mind’s eye.

“By your candle,” said Lord Tom, “I mean your talent and intrepidity. Permit me to present you to the two ladies whom, at the hazard of your life, you preserved—Mrs. and Miss Mervyn—who, I am sure, will be too happy to award you all the gratitude which you deserve.”

The ladies turned round, as if preconcertedly, and—more shame be to them!—burst into an immoderate fit of laughter.

“I don’t understand this,” said Jack, who, on the contrary, understood it perfectly.

“Nor I, sir,” said the elder lady of the two. “That we were miraculously saved—at least from what, at the moment, was thought inevitable destruction, is most true; but it is to this gentle-

man we owe our preservation,"—(drawing forward a short, stubby, thick-whiskered man, whom Jack in a moment recognised as having seen on the beach,)—"Mr. Brunt."

"Ha, ha!" said Jack: "that's the way, ma'am some men get credit for what other men have done."

"I recollect you, sir," said Lieutenant Brunt. "I saw you—stood next you on the beach—and, I dare say, you recollect me. I remember your kindness in offering to hold my cloak when I started upon my hurried voyage, or whatever it might be called."

"By Jove!" said Lord Tom, calling the attention of his party to a great effort made by the men who had the hawser round the capstan to get the brig off—"she will be saved yet!"

The relief that this change of conversation afforded Jack, was more than compensated by the evident change which he so clearly observed in his friend Lord Tom's manner; and affecting to be extremely anxious to get a "good look" at the operation in progress, he fidgeted himself away as far as possible from Mrs. and Miss Mervyn and the odious lieutenant, whose exertions it was perfectly true he had witnessed, and, like a simpleton, had appropriated to himself.

What was he to do:—remain, and battle it out; or go to "The Ship," and wait the result? He felt that he had certainly carried the joke a little too far, but how to retrace his steps he did not exactly see. How on earth could Lord Tom have got acquainted with the two women who were saved, and who, instead of being two beautiful girls ready to eat him up for his gallant exertions in their rescue from a watery grave, were mother and daughter, neither beautiful, nor ever having been so! but then, "Master Shallow owed him a thousand pounds:" that was his stay—his prop—his support—his safeguard and security.

Fortified by this consideration, he remained on the pier, and eventually rejoined the party. The attempt to get the brig off succeeded; she floated, and was soon afterwards towed into the harbour. The ladies and their preserver took their leave of Lord Tom, but without bestowing the slightest notice upon Jack, who cowered beneath the glance of his lordship, who, to his mingled surprise, gratification, and regret, never uttered another syllable upon the subject. Lord Tom walked towards "The Ship;" so did Jack—on a parallel line: but Lord Tom took no more notice of him than if he had been a stock or a stone. They reached the inn door; Lord Tom entered the house; Jack, as usual, followed him,—but Lord Tom made no sign; and the first mark of recognition which he received was, to his utter horror and amazement, from Lord Ilfracombe, who meeting him in the hall declared himself quite delighted at renewing the acquaintance so propitiously begun at "The Duke of Marlborough" near Wigglesford a few weeks before.

Brag was now completely taken aback. The chilling coldness of Lord Tom's reception in the first instance struck him hard; the contemptuous manner in which the rescued ladies treated him, hit him harder in the second; but he was so extremely vain and silly, that even after all these indications, he was not able to make up his mind whether Lord Ilfracombe were in earnest or jest when he so warmly expressed his gratification at again meeting him.

Still more was he puzzled when his lordship invited him to luncheon,—a part of the plan which he had preconcerted, and which, as his lordship did not then know of the last exposure of Jack's humbug with regard to saving the lives of the ladies in the brig, he still resolved upon carrying into effect. That affair, however, in conjunction with a letter Lord Tom had received from London, touching the double offer and rejection of Mrs. Dallington and Blanche Englefield, had determined his lordship to eject him in a much less ceremonious manner; but as Lord Ilfracombe knew nothing of this, he insisted upon Jack's coming up-stairs, under the arrangement into which he had previously entered with his nephew.

Jack, who took the whole thing *de bonne foi*, screwed up his curls and settled his collar as usual, and accompanied the earl to one of the drawing-rooms where luncheon had been put down; (after which the party, excepting Lord Tom, were to start for Canterbury, see its antiquities, and sleep, on their way to London;) and was, by his lordship, ushered into the apartment, in which he found, assembled together, Lady Ilfracombe, Lord and Lady Dawlish, and Lady Fanny Smartly.

Lady Fanny, Jack knew by sight, her ladyship being a pre-eminent equestrian of the equestrian order; but the other ladies he did not recognise, although he concluded that the elder lady was my lord's wife. The other couple, although they were of the party which picked up the earl at "The Duke of Marlborough," he did not at the moment recollect.

"Lady Ilfracombe," said the earl, "let me present Mr. Brag to you—a great friend of Tom's, who will be here presently—and with whom I passed a remarkably pleasant hour or two on that wet day when you discovered me in my shelter from the rain."

"Ah!" thought Jack, "then he remembers it all: what will happen next!—perhaps he has forgotten some of it—perhaps, if he has not forgotten, he forgives. What I'm to do, I don't know—I'm in for it; and so here goes, and no mistake."

"That *was* a dreadful wet day, my lord," said Jack; "I had no idea at the time whom I had the honour of speaking to, but when one is at an inn whatever comes uppermost comes out—and—I—dare say I talked a little too fast."

"Not a bit," said the earl. "My great object, besides the pleasure of having your society at luncheon and gratifying Tom,

is to undeceive you as to our real characters. We are not the 'kill-joys and wet-blankets' you take us for."—Come, Lady Ilfracombe, let us sit down; Tom will be here immediately,—we have no time to lose."

The bell was rung, the servants appeared, the little party were soon seated; but before fork had assailed a chicken's breast, or knife been flourished over it, Lord Tom himself entered the room evidently excited.

"My lord," said Lord Tom, "addressing himself to the earl, "I feel it my duty to undeceive you, as I am myself undeceived, in the character of a person in this room, who is only protected by being in it, in the character of my uncle's guest. He has now the assurance to sit down in the presence of Lady Fanny Smartly, with whom he claimed to you a personal intimacy; he has the impudence to sit next Lady Dawlish, my cousin, whose person he ridiculed without being acquainted with it; he libelled you, sir, without ever having seen you; and, in short has exhibited himself in the most contemptible possible character. This, at your lordship's desire, I would have overlooked, in order to carry on the jest a little further, and have had the satisfaction of marching him out with all the honours of ridicule; but circumstances have come to my knowledge this day which render it my duty to insist upon his instantly quitting this room. How he has the audacity to sit down in the society of ladies whom he has vilified, and of men whom he has aspersed, it is for him to decide; but since I have had the misfortune of associating him in the slightest degree with my family,—which, be it observed, I have carefully abstained from doing, whenever it was possible,—I feel it due to them to evince my feelings by desiring, or, if necessary, by ordering him out."

"My dear Tom!" said Lord Ilfracombe,—and the ladies looked aghast.

"Come, sir!" said Lord Tom;—"I have to apologize, my dear aunt, for this course, but it is the only one;—walk out—with me, if you please, sir."

"Oh!" said Jack, rising from his seat, "in course; if your lordship goes out too, there can be no difficulty whatsoever—only I don't understand—I know something which may, perhaps, make a difference."

"Whatever difference there is between us, sir," said Lord Tom, "shall be settled immediately."

"My dear Tom," said Lady Ilfracombe,—“what do you mean?”

"Nothing to be alarmed about, my dear madam," said Tom. "I shall be back in five minutes at the farthest."

Lord Ilfracombe, who had really intended to have a good joke out of the affair, and have regularly presented Jack by degrees to Lady Dawlish, the "winky-eyed, waxy doll of the toy-shop," and

the "monstrous bore" Dawlish, and soon, until he had shamed him laughingly out of his absurd propensity to talk big, was seriously vexed at the manner in which his nephew had lost his temper and taken the matter up; but the truth really was, that the conduct of the man had grown unbearable. The scandal of the affair in London had made him ridiculous beyond measure, and the last event of the preservation of the distressed "females" crowned the whole.

Jack certainly felt extremely awkward in getting up from the table at which he had placed himself so comfortably; but, embarrassing as was the movement, he still chuckled at the thought of having Lord Tom in Dover gaol before sunset: he never travelled without his lordship's I. O. U.'s carefully deposited in a Russia leather pocket-book; and his lordship, as he felt, might be secure that if *he* did not ride his lordship's horses at Paris on the next Sunday, his lordship would not be at Paris to see them run.

When Jack rose, which he found inevitable,—for, spite of Lord Ilfracombe and the compassionate ladies, Tom was inexorable,—he said.

"Well,—I didn't expect this—I was asked by Lord Ilfracombe to luncheon—I did not force myself here;—and I *do* think—considering—however—I say nothing;—but in the presence of females—I do not think this altogether proper;—however, 'might overcomes right'—and I—can only—add—I wish your lordship and the ladies a good morning. It is hard treatment, but I'll be even with somebody that you may rely upon, and no mistake."

"Now, Mr. Brag," said Lord Tom when they left the apartment, "just step into this room, and hear what I have to say."

"Oh, in course," said Jack.

"From the time I first made your acquaintance on the course at Epsom, I always treated you like a gentleman," said Lord Tom; "I introduced you to my friends—you lived with me—I took you to Mrs. Dallington's—all that story, sir, I have heard. You meet my uncle accidentally—you vilify him to his face, traduce me and the ladies of my family. You render me ridiculous wherever I take you—you insult everybody you come near—and you wind up with telling me a distinct and deliberate falsehood with regard to your exploits in saving two ladies the night before last, whose faces you did not even know when you saw them this morning. All this you do. Now, I only ask you, can you be surprised that I am in the highest degree enraged with you?"

"Not a bit," said Jack; "I dare say you are very right, and I am very wrong: but you forget, my Lord Tom, one part of the story—I mean the money you have borrowed of me;—if that has slipped *your* memory, it has not slipped *mine*,—and I will take care that you shall not slip *me*, for, by Job—"

"Don't make a noise, sir," said Lord Tom ; "give me back my *bons* or whatever securities you have of mine, and I'll pay you down every shilling upon that account; and thank you, not only for the accommodation you have afforded me, but for the lesson you have taught me, as to making friendships, which I shall not, I think, easily forget."

"What! are you going to pay me?" said Jack.

"To the last farthing, sir," said Lord Tom.

"Why, then," said Jack, "that's more than I ever expected. I've got your *bons* and your I. O. U.'s all here in my pocket-book. Stop,—let's see; there—"

"Take your time," said Lord Tom; "I don't want to hurry you."

"There," said Jack; "two hundred and twenty one hundred and ten—one hundred. That's all."

"Four hundred and thirty pounds," said Lord Tom.

"Exactly so," said Jack; "but I say—I won't take a cheque."

"But you *will* be impertinent," replied my lord. "Here, sir; here are the four hundred and thirty pounds in bank-notes. Count them, sir; look at them."

"It's all right, and no mistake," said Jack, looking over the paper.

"Here perish all my *bons*!" said Lord Tom, tearing them up, "and, I hope, with them, all my absurdities. To be sure, I am easily deceived."

"Yes, very; you are what I call, as innocent as a lamb," said Jack. "Stories *may* come out. I say nothing."

"Do you mean to insinuate?" said his lordship.

"I insinuate nothing," said Jack, "but I wish you a very good day. Boaster and humbug as you call me, I've done one thing to-day that would puzzle a philosopher. I'll be hanged if I haven't got four hundred and thirty pounds out of an empty pocket! That's what I call coming it strong. I've lost the honour of your lordship's acquaintance,—that's a misfortune; but I've got my money back, and that's a capital set-off *per contra*, and no mistake."

"With this moment, sir, all connexion between us ceases," said Lord Tom.

"Thank you, my lord," said Jack; "good morning!"

Lord Tom, who was exceedingly agitated during this burst, returned to the drawing-room, and the reproaches of the ladies for his cruelty towards the little man; and Brag, the moment his lordship had disappeared, leaned over the balusters and cried in a loud and commanding tone—

"Waiter!"

"Yes, sir?"

"Order me a chaise and four to Hythe directly."

"Yes, sir."

"And"—in a louder tone of voice—"bring me my bill—a bottle of soda-water, and change for a hundred-pound note!"

CHAPTER XIV.

WHILE these events were occurring on the sea-shore, matters were progressing, as the Americans have it, in the metropolis, and the two pair of lovers enjoying a felicity to which, spite of all their inclinations and affections, they had previously been strangers. Rushton, taught by the precepts and encouraged by the practice of Sir Charles, began to think that a woman might be lively without being vicious, sad without thinking of his rivals; and civil to her acquaintance without being a coquette; while Sir Charles, assured of Mrs. Dallington's esteem, began to appreciate the merits of her character, and understand, which to him were before incomprehensible, the fluctuations of spirits and variation of temper which he had frequently remarked, but which, until the recent *éclaircissement* took place, he never suspected to have their origin in his own coldness and apparent indecision.

Out of evil comes good; and, whatever faults Mr. Brag possessed, he certainly had the merit of bringing matters in the Dallington family to a crisis. The double marriage already began to be spoken of, and hints were even given upon the subject in the fashionable intelligence of the *Morning Post*.

Of the other party, the Browns and Meads, we know enough for the present; they are on their way to Paris, as happy as may be, having left Mrs. Brown the elder, who declined the tour, at the doctor's house in Burlington Gardens, where she was to reside, even after her daughter's return from the Continent, which could not long be delayed, in consequence of Mead's professional engagements in London.

While these quieter persons are moving regularly in their proper spheres, it becomes our duty to regard the movements of the exploded Jack, with the same sort of attention which we bestow upon the wriggings and twistings of the animalculæ in the great microscope, the natural insignificance of which render the development of their limbs and motions matters of interest, being such as to leave their distinctive characteristics perfectly invisible to the naked eye.

The bill was scarcely paid, and the change settled, before Jack's terribly alarming post-chaise and four rattled up to the street-door of "The Ship," making the cliffs reverberate with its clatter, and—

"—— the very stones prate its whereabouts."

Open flew the door—bang went the steps—pop went the cork of the bottle of soda-water—down went the draught at full speed, nearly choking the patient, or rather the impatient with its effervescence—and at three skips and a jump the little man sprang into the “carriage,” and throwing himself into one of its corners, as if anxious to conceal himself from the anxious gaze of the public, not one of whom was looking at him, away he went, boiling with rage and foaming with vexation, and resolved to pay Lord Tom off in his own coin, and no mistake.

Little did the furious John know what he was driving to; little did he anticipate what was to happen to him at Eastbourn, which was his eventual place of destination, or what strange events his sudden dismissal from the friendship of Lord Tom was to bring about. The immediate purpose of his soul was to reach Hastings that night, in time to despatch a letter to his mother, directing her *not* to direct his letters to Paris.

Arrived at Hythe, Jack's fever had by no means subsided; yet, upon ascertaining the hour at which the post left Hastings, and feeling certain, since he did not mean to “carry on” with four horses, that he should not arrive there in time to despatch his filial epistle by the night's mail, he resolved to rest for an hour or two where he was, until he saw the boys returning with the chaise to Dover, so that by no means it might be discovered that he had discarded his leaders, (as men sometimes in a pet, feel very much inclined to do,)—and that he might have time to write his letter, which he did, in the following terms:—

“White Hart, Hythe, Thursday evening.

“MY DEAR MOTHER,—I wrote to you yesterday from Deal; and, as Jem Salmon would say, a deal has been doing since I wrote. After having seen Brown and his new wife, and having been bullied, as I told you, by the doctor to whom that snivelling Nance is married, I thought there was an end; so in course, I went back as soon as the smoke of the Ferret, the steamer in which they crossed, told me they were off. I had a very pleasant ride to Dover, for I had made an acquaintance with an uncommon gentlemanly man, a captain of a Dutch man-of-war lying off that port, with whom I was so much pleased that I gave him up my sleeping-room, which in course was the crack apartment of the hotel where I lodged. So, in the morning, he would insist upon attending me back. Indeed, it was generally supposed I was going on a visit to the Castle; and it was with great trouble I undeceived them, for, being so much with the nobility in these parts, in course they took for granted ten thousand things which one can't help.

“Well, when I arrived at Dover,” for so Mr. Brag thought it uncommonly smart, to spell it, “I found Lord Tom with a couple

of females talking, on the pier, which somehow I did not like:—I am, my dear mother, very particular in that respect;—so, directly I saw it, I said to Lord Tom, ‘Tom,’ says I, ‘this won’t do before people of character,’ and that kind of thing—and so I walks right away.

“Well, up I goes to ‘The Ship;’—that’s the inn here, the only place a man of any character can go to, and where in course I am uncommon well known;—and who should I see there but old Ilfracombe, Tom’s uncle,—a kind of a bore of a lord whom I have always made a point of shirking, with his wife, and son, and daughter-in-law, and a Lady Fanny Smartly, which rides in the Park. So when I goes in—‘Jack,’ says my lord, ‘I’m delighted to see you. Where’s Tom?’ meaning Lord Tom Towzle, which is his nephew. Says I, ‘My lord, I can’t say; I have left him on the pier with two rum ones.’ Upon which my lord says, ‘Never mind *him*; come up and have some luncheon.’ I said, ‘My Lord,’ says I, ‘I never lunches.’ But that war’nt no go; he would not have it at no price. ‘Come along, Jack,’ says he, and up he drags me, smack smooth into the room with all his relations, and no mistake. I’d rather have been in a pigstye; however, Lady Dawlish and Lady Fanny smothered me with kindness, and I was forced to sit down and sham eating; which, in course, I did.

“Well! in comes Lord Tom; and he was in a regular humour because I would not speak to the two promiscuous females which he was parading about with. So I stands no nonsense, but ups to him in a minute, like a game cock, before the females and all, and just gave him as good as he could bring. I told him my mind, and pitched into him about the money he owed me. Had him there!—in course he couldn’t stump a dump: so I just shook my whip—it was my little whip—right before him, and I says, ‘Good by’e, my lord! When you learn manners, we associate together again; for the present I cut you,—not with *this*,’ says I, shaking my little Crowther again right in his face; ‘but the next time I see you, by Job I’ll have my money out of you!’ With that, he walked away just like a dog with his tail what the soldiers call countermarched; a regular try-back, and run into the kennel amongst the females of his family.

“And see what a fool he is: I was to ride for him on the Champy Mas at Paris next Sunday—got my new jacket all ready:—and now he’ll lose that, and no mistake. So instead of stepping over the herring-pond, I am going to Eastbourne, which is a nice, retired place, and where I hope you will send me down fifty or a hundred pounds: for to tell you, my dear mother, the plain truth,—I’m stumped. So don’t forget, and direct to the hotel, Eastbourne.

“Yours affectionately.

JOHN BRAG.

"P. S.—Tell me something about Kitty: I can't make it out. Brown has got one child, and two carriages:—there's a go!"

When he had written and sealed this, he enquired, as usual, of the waiter, the way to the Post-Office; and having been properly directed, himself slipped his packet into the box. The epistle despatched, Jack got into his new chaise, and proceeded towards the place of his destination with a "happy pair" of poststers.

It was lateish in the evening when he reached Hastings, and was driven to that admirable inn, "The Swan," which certainly combines all the attributes which a man does not require in a house of the sort at a watering-place. Jack, however, bundled out of his yellow-and-two, and being in no humour to soliloquize, betook himself to the ill-smelling coffee-room, and contented himself with ordering a bed, and—as he seldom failed to do—a preparatory glass of hot brandy and water. Dinner he had had none—(his appetite was not particularly sharp under all the circumstances)—but, by way of what he called a "stay" to his stomach, he told the waiter to bring him a sandwich—the only single word in the English language which comprehensively describes in a dissyllable, dirt, butter, and mustard, laid between two bits of stale bread.

As for Hastings—Jack cared nothing. Whether it had been founded by Jack Hastings, the Danish pirate, or whether Athelstan had coined money in it, was all one to him:—Whether Robert, earl of Eu, or John de Dreux, had the better right to the castle, disturbed not Jack; nor, in the present temper of his mind, would he have cared one pin, if, after the French burned it in 1377, it had never been rebuilt. He was, as he told his mother, regularly "stumped"—not exactly in the way he wished to make her believe—but still, stumped he was: and perhaps never did little man experience fall so sudden or deep as that by which Jack had been afflicted during the last four-and-twenty hours.

It was impossible, however, for the little man to withstand the impulse of his inherent infirmity:—the old, stale, worn-out trick of asking after his servant and carriage, was again played off at "The Swan."

"No, sir," was, of course, the answer to the enquiries if his man and phaeton had arrived.

"I told him to come here," said Jack, who, till he reached the place, did not even know that the sign of the inn was "The Swan."

"I'll send to enquire, sir," said an officious waiter; "he may have gone to some other house. What name shall I say?"

"Brag," said Jack;—"and, stay—if he should be at any other inn by mistake, tell him to bring me up the large leather case with my writing-desk, and the small one with my dressing-case—and the brown cloak lined with fur:—remember, the brown one—not

the blue.—But I'd bet my life he has made some infernal mistake."

Away went the man. Jack had gratified his ruling passion, and again fell into no pleasing reverie.

It was in this state of mind that Jack sat looking at the "drink," which had been placed before him until his eyes seemed to swim in the glass. The time began to verge on nine o'clock when a sort of scuffling noise outside the coffee-room door aroused his attention; and turning his eyes to the source of the disturbance, he beheld a slim, pale, and what is called an "interesting-looking" man, enter the room somewhat feebly, assiduously wrapped up in divers and sundry coats and cloaks; his face peeping out from under a fanciful kind of foraging cap, overlaid by a pink silk handkerchief, looking like the pale queen of Night peeping to earth through some intervening clouds.

Jack saw that the approaching object was what he considered "uncommon genteel;" and when it threw itself down upon a seat in a state of exhaustion, he began to think he had discovered somebody upon whom he might make an impression—in whom he might find an agreeable listener;—which was, after all, *his* notion—when he could find one—of a pleasant companion.

"Pay the chairmen," said the stranger to the waiter, "and tell Rummagee-Doss to bring me some Eau de Cologne."

The waiter disappeared.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the stranger to Brag, "but I am a sad invalid,—and so hipped and wretched—upon my life, I declare, I can't tell how:—so low and miserable from ill health, that I prefer this corner of the coffee-room to any private room of my own—and, I am afraid, I cause a great deal of inconvenience. I declare, I wouldn't for the world, if I—"

"None in the least," said Jack. "Don't mind *me*, sir; I'm not particular any how:—take everything as it comes—straight up, right down, and no mistake."

"I have just arrived from India," said the stranger. "I never suffered anything like the wretchedness of the voyage: such a set of people!—no sentiment—no delicacy about them;—so rough and noisy,—and I so extremely indisposed!—so, the moment I could, I got on shore here. The purser of the ship—a great coarse creature, who used to laugh all day long like a hyæna—landed here with letters and things, all about business, for those people in Leadenhall Street; and so I—it was a very lucky chance—I said I would land here too:—I brought nothing but half a dozen packages of things I wanted, and my man, Rummagee-Doss, just to take care of me a little;—I only came ashore yesterday—and I have been to take a warm bath, and I feel a great deal better already; for the nasty smell of the ship, and such a great deal of talking, and playing games and romps, and a parcel of women who had no sympathy for a sick

creature like me, quite upset me,—I really never was so overcome in all my life!”

“It must be a deuce of a bore,” said Jack, “being boxed up for half a year in one of those great arks.”

“Oh! sir,” said the stranger, “you have no idea of the misery of it!—and the man—the captain—had nothing in the world to make one comfortable. He had tea, but no milk—his cow died; and not a drop of lemonade was to be got—nothing but wine and beer, and those things, which one can’t drink you know—and no pastry after the first five weeks! Oh! if you knew what I have suffered, sir, you would excuse any little trouble I give.”

Hereabouts entered a fine-looking piece of brown humanity, done up in muslin, with a high-caste yellow streak down his forehead, bearing a bottle of Eau de Cologne, who turned out to be Rummagee-Doss, the stranger’s Kitmagar.

“You don’t dislike *this*, do you, sir?” said the stranger, holding up the Eau de Cologne bottle.

“On the contrary,” said Jack, “quite the reverse, and no mistake.”

“*Jou*,” said the stranger, and the muslin and streak retired.

“That’s a rummish cut of a toggery,” said Jack, who had never seen an Oriental attendant before.

“A what!” said the stranger.

“Curious dress,” said Jack.

“Pretty and picturesque,” said the stranger, “ill suited to this climate. I don’t mean to keep him in England—he is an excellent creature—and so affectionate—I never saw so much kindness—all during my illness—so sick. I declare—well I never did—”

“I’m not used to that sort of thing,” said Jack; “however, if you are not going to turn in just yet, I’ll order another glass of ‘hot with’ just to keep you company.”

“Do,—you are so good,” said the stranger, twisting himself about gracefully; “I am sure we shall be great friends by and bye. I am going to have a little weak tea, and I have taken such a fancy to a raspberry tart, I think I shall indulge myself—for I am very unwell.”

“Tea and tarts,” said Jack, “that’s what I call a queer cross; but I suppose you chaps from the East have a great many varieties of feed of which we know nothing.”

“It is extremely agreeable there,” said the stranger, “but I have such wretched health that I cannot enjoy anything.”

At this period of the dialogue, the waiter arrived with a tray, on which a tea equipage was arranged, and sure enough, three raspberry tartlets, ovals of jam covered with a trelliage of pastry, which might be heraldically described as “Gules, fretty of Or,” but in which no reasonable mortal—“not to speak it profanely,”

above the age of thirteen, indulges in the way of eating. Jack looked, wondered at the taste of his companion, and ordered a replenishment of his glass.

"I shan't discommode you," said Jack, "shall I?—I'm not for late sitting, but, finding a gentleman to converse with, why, I think, eleven or so a goodish hour to turn in, and no mistake."

"I shall be delighted," said the stranger. "Oh dear! this tea is so strong—Qui hi—oh, I forget I am—Rummagee—oh dear dear.—Waiter"—

"Shall I ring the bell?" said Jack.

"Oh don't let me trouble you, sir," said the stranger.

The waiter luckily appeared—more grog was brought for Jack, and a little more hot water for his companion.

"Have you been long in India, sir?" said Jack—who began to feel his natural desire to "find out" anything come strongly upon him.

"Only a few years," said the stranger. "I did uncommonly well at first, for my mother, who is an excellent woman—indeed I don't know how to speak of her in terms strong enough, for I declare I never did see such a creature—got a friend of hers to put me on his staff."

"Oh!" said Jack, stirring his grog, but not at all comprehending the precise nature of the advantage to be derived from what appeared to him a very extraordinary position.

"But at last," said the stranger, "I could not bear the tyranny of the old creature of a general, so I left him and joined my regiment; but when I got to it, the sun was so hot, and the duty so hard, it was too much for me; so I got sick leave, and I must say I never saw such handsome treatment in my life; everybody—I declare they did—even nasty creatures whom I hated—all of them were ready to bear witness to my illness, and to get me home the very moment I expressed a desire that way."

It is a remarkable fact that people of education and even general knowledge and experience, and all of them therefore wonderfully superior to Jack Brag, have such strange and ill-arranged notions of our Indian empire,—for so it may be called—that the sharpest and cleverest of them will ask a man who has arrived from the East, if he happen to know Mr. Hawkins, or Mr. Jenkins, or Mr. Tomkins, who went to India about ten years before; without reference to the Presidency to which he went, or even the service in which he was engaged, which, as they who know truth, know, is something tantamount to a Bengallee asking an Englishman if he knows Mr. Smith of Great Britain; the extent of territory in the one, equalizing the numerical superiority in population in the other.

If wise men and clever men, and clever women and wise men, ask such questions of returning Indians, is it to be wondered that

Jack Brag, who knew no more about India than Chaucer did, should venture to inquire something about his horror, Brown, and, what really *was* interesting to him, the fate of Brown's wife? Of course the reader must think that Brag would make those researches after his own fashion; and so he did—but he *did* make them.

"I," said Brag, drawing himself up, and setting his neckcloth to rights—"I had some connexions in India—but they, like you, have come home—extremely rich and all that—stumpy down, and no mistake;—left them at Dover—cause indeed of my coming here on my way to meet a friend of mine, at Eastbourn;—they are off to France—excellent people—I have a very high regard for them."

"What part of India do they come from?" said the stranger, bathing his temples with one hand, and eating a tartlet with the other.

"What part!" said Jack, "Oh—I—I—don't know—India—some-where about—"

"What is the name of your friend?" said the stranger.

"His name," said Jack, "I should think, must be pretty well known in those parts;—Brown is his name."

"Brown!" said the stranger, "dear me!—a gentleman!—"

"Why," said Brag, "I don't say much, sir,—but, as I have already said he is a near connexion of mine, I need not, I suppose, answer your question—eh!—don't you think so?—I'm plain spoken—straight up, right down, and no mistake. He's a deuced fine fellow, with a deuced handsome fortune, and married to my sister."

"Oh!" said the stranger, "Ah!—then I don't know;—but I *did* know a great horrid creature in India with a carman's shoulders and balustrade legs.—Oh—such a man—of the name of Brown, whose behaviour to a young delicate creature, the daughter of the general, to whom I was aid-de-camp, absolutely drove me out of India—that is—in point of fact—"

"Oh," said Jack, "that cannot be *my* brother-in-law; he is a regular good fellow; prime chap! what I call a regular switcher, and no mistake."

"Upon my word," said the stranger, "you *do* talk so!—a switcher!—I don't in the least understand you. The dreadful man, I mean, was a serjeant in some regiment, who came out with a wife. Oh, if you had but seen her—such a monster!—all I don't know how—so coarse, and that kind of thing, who voted herself a beauty; and so somehow for *her* sake, he wanted to be made a gentleman of."

"Yes, sir," said Jack, beginning to grow rather suspicious that his cast had been too good.

"I declare I never saw anything like those people," said the

stranger ; "so impudent, so pushing, and so rude ! However, it did ; it answered ; and a man—a major—kind of secretary in the general's office, took a fancy to him—Heaven knows why, *I* never could see anything about him to admire—and made him his clerk : from *that*, you would hardly believe it, he became first an officer, then an aide-de-camp, and at last—but then, there is such a long *fie-fie* story about that—he married the general's daughter !"

"What !" said Jack, affecting perfect indifference, his cheeks reed as fire and his hands cold as ice, "while his other wife was alive ?"

"Oh dear no !" said she stranger ; "she was dead. She was a very naughty woman, quite paw, paw !"

"Quite what ?" said Jack.

"Oh you understand what I mean," said Fripps, (for Narcissus it was, who spoke,) patting his arm,—"*quite fie, fie !*"

"I don't know what you mean," said Jack, nevertheless shrewdly guessing—hating the half-uttered monosyllabic and mincing manner of his raspberry-eating associate, and feeling, callous as he was, something like a reflective affection for his sister,—"*What did she do ?*"

"Oh," said Fripps, "I can't tell you ;—upon my word something so shocking—and—I never did—it was—oh, very bad !"

"And," said Jack, his lips quivering, "what—what became of her ?"

"They buried her, poor thing !" said Fripps.

"But—but," said Jack, "tell me, if you please, sir, was she parted from George before *that* ?"

"George !" said Fripps ; "what—do you know *this* Brown too ?"

"No," said Jack ; "no, no—I—don't know him—eh ! You said his name was George—didn't you ? She—I—should like to know about *her*—that's all. You have madame wish to know—that's all."

"What a dear sympathetic mind you have !" said Fripps ; "but let me beg you not to trouble yourself about tipsy Kitty !"

"There," said Jack,—"you see—you call *her* Kitty—Well, you called *him* George.—You did not recollect ; and so—she—she—"

"She," said Fripps, "first took to drinking, and then—then—don't you know ?—she left this great odious Brown—ran away from him."

"Oh," said Jack ; "ah—yes, yes ; that's natural."

"And as everybody said," said Fripps, "as they do when a man dies after a long illness, it was a happy release."

"Yes, so it was—that's what *I* often say.—Poor Kitty !" muttered Jack, to himself—but audibly striking his hand upon the table ; "Poor soul—poor soul !"

"There it is again," said Fripps ; "now you say Kitty."

"*You* said Kitty," said Jack ; "how else should I know ?"

"There was nothing romantic about her," said Fripps; "she was a dowdy-looking thing, the daughter of a candle-maker somewhere in London; and this Brown persuaded her that he was an officer, and so she ran away with him, and, as she told a friend of mine, who really—upon my word—I declare—people *do* such things in India—used to meet her and talk to her, sometimes in the evening after she had gone away from cantonments,—she had a brother, who helped her to run away with Brown, as she told *him*, because he himself wanted to be very civil indeed to Brown's sister—don't you see?"

"Yes," said Jack; not lifting his eyes from the table—"Umph!—I do—I see it all."

"It is so strange," said Fripps, "that you should have asked me about anybody of such a common name as Brown in all India, and that I should have been able to give you such a comical history. However, as I told you, *this* Brown afterwards married the general's daughter, and when *that* happened, I gave up my staff appointment,—I could not stop in the place,—and so Brown succeeded me, and then the general died, and left him the whole of his large fortune."

"He did, did he?" said Jack; "why then—" swallowing at one gulp the remainder of his grog—"that—eh!—that was—straight up, right down, and no mistake!"—and the laugh that followed the words was hollow and sepulchral.

"What office did your relation fill in India?" said Fripps.

"I forget, at the moment," said Jack.

"Was he civil or military?" said Fripps.

"Very civil, I believe," said Jack; "but—I don't know."

"No, but," said Fripps, "I mean, was he a civilian or a soldier?"

"I forget," said Jack, who was quite "toppled over" himself for once, "but we'll—that is, if you have no objection—talk this over in the morning. I'm what you call, right slick stumped; I have been riding hard all the forenoon, and am regularly done. Perhaps we shall meet at breakfast, sir."

"I shall be so happy you can't think!" said Fripps. "I shall try and get up towards town to-morrow in the course of the day, perhaps as far as Tunbridge Wells. But that will make no difference; and I shall be quite delighted to renew our acquaintance in London when we meet there."

"You are uncommon good," said Jack; "I shall be very glad indeed"—at the same time ringing the bell for a light. In a minute or two more he quitted the room, with a bow to Fripps, who seemed greatly disappointed at the growing want of cordiality which he thought he had discovered in Jack's manner, as their dialogue had advanced.

So, however, they parted for the night.

In a few minutes afterwards, Fripps rang to give Rummagee-Doss notice of his approach to rest; and while he was half leaning, half lolling on the table, on the edge of his departure for his room, he incidentally asked the waiter if he knew the name of the gentleman who had just retired.

"The gentleman's name is Brag, sir," said the man.

"Brag!" said Fripps; "you don't mean that!—well! if ever—"

"That is the gentleman's name, sir," replied the man.

"Well then, if ever I did"—said Fripps. "What time is he going in the morning?"

"He has ordered horses at nine, sir," said the man. "The chaise is to follow him to St. Leonard's, as he means to walk on."

"Well, never mind," said Fripps; "only take care and don't let anybody call me till ten. I have no doubt—the name is so uncommon—but that I have told the unhappy man the whole story of his wretched *fié-fié* sister. *Her* name was Brag—that's all I know. I declare I wouldn't have done such a thing for a thousand rupees. Hitherow, come along:—where is the creature? Here help me up. Good night! Well, I declare—come, Rummagee—it can't be helped!—good night!—good night! Well—if ever——"

And so tottered up to his chamber the delicate Narcissus Fripps, who had thus innocently afforded Jack all the information about his sister which he perhaps could never have derived from any other source. This advantage Jack had gained by boasting of his high Indian connexions; while the misery of Fripps, consequent upon the discovery that his companion was Mrs. Brown's brother, was occasioned by Brag's *having* ostentatiously announced his name, while asking after his servant and carriage.

It is needless to add, as the jest-books say, that Jack, who certainly did not much admire the manners of his communicative companion, and still less the nature of his communication, was up in the morning by seven, and, before eight, was off towards St. Leonard's. As he walked onwards, his mind was as much occupied as it could be with anything, with the account he had heard of his sister. From what Mead had previously told him, the intelligence of the preceding evening certainly did not so much surprise him as it otherwise would have done; but every man has *some* feeling, more or less as the case may be; and Jack had been, at the moment, affected by the unexpected recital of this piece of family history.

From the meditation in which he was absorbed, Jack was aroused upon his arrival at that splendid creation of modern art and industry, St. Leonard's, which perhaps affords one the most beautiful and wonderful proofs of individual taste, judgment, and perseverance, that our nation exhibits. Under the superintendence of Mr. Burton, a desert has become a thickly-peopled town: build-

ings of an extensive nature and most elegant character rear their heads where, but a few years since, the barren cliffs presented their chalky fronts to the storm and wave; and rippling streams and hanging groves adorn the valley which, twenty years since, was a sterile and shrubless ravine.

Jack, who appreciated in a very slight degree the beauties of nature, and who talked of a fine country only in reference to hedges, ditches, stone walls, and five-barred gates, looked at the sea, only as a great glittering body of water which dazzled his eyes—and at cliffs as something uncommonly out of the way. His approbation of St. Leonard's was excited not by the great changes its establishment has made in the face of the neighbourhood, nor by its intrinsic beauty; (and he expressed his satisfaction to a promiscuous friend with whom he had fallen into conversation in the streets;) but because it reminded him of the Regent's Park; and he judiciously added, that if it could only be got away from the sea, and set down altogether in a sporting part of Leicestershire, with a lot more stables, it would be a regular "trump," and no mistake.

His temporary companion heard his opinion, looked at him, touched his hat, and walked on.

It may be asked, if Jack had such an aversion for the sea, why he should propose to visit Eastbourne—or why he had hovered upon the coast? The truth is, Jack was like the king of the chess-board towards the end of the game. The widow and her sister occupied the London square, and if he moved thither, he would certainly put himself into danger; from Dover he had been driven by Lord Tom's check—or rather cheque; France was occupied by his adversary's queen; and the inland watering-places were filled by knights and rooks, who were so placed as to keep him at bay if he ventured near their quadrates. Eastbourne, he had heard, was quiet and retired; and the fewer people there were resident in it, the less chance he had of being known; and obscurity to him, just at this particular moment, was, strange to say, desirable. His various defeats must inevitably become known, a circumstance which would speedily bring the game to an end; and his last check would in all probability, arrive without the accompanying cry of "mate" from any of the ladies whom he had so assiduously besieged, so to Eastbourne he proceeded as soon as the appointed chaise from "The Swan" overtook him.

To those, to whom Nature has given a taste, the drive from Hastings to Eastbourne is one full of interest; but Jack, who looked at Pevensey Castle with a shudder on account of the owls and the ivy that were about it, and considered the neighbouring martello towers as works of coeval antiquity with its Roman brick walls, regarded with an "equal eye" every other object, animate or inanimate which he happened to encounter or pass on his way to the

place of his destination; and most certainly, of all things that never entered his head, one never was near it,—which is the fact, that we are indebted for the term “merry-Andrew” to a native of the, at present, duller little cluster of houses in England—this very identical Pevensey itself. It was there, that Andrew Borde, or, according to his own absurd latinization of his name, Andreas Perforatus, first saw the light. He was educated first at Winchester, and then at New College, where he studied physic, and travelled over almost every part of the then known world. He returned to England in 1542, took his doctor’s degree, and settled at his native place, whence, finding the climate remarkable healthy, and the people all exceedingly well, he proceeded to London, and became first physician to Henry VIII.

He was, however, a wag; and used to visit fairs and markets, and make speeches to the people, and crack jokes, by way of advocating the cause of medicine, and especially the use of those particular remedies, which his eloquence went most highly to eulogize;—hence his *sobriquet*, wherever he was known, was “Merry Andrew,”—a nickname which, in the first instance, descended to his successors in practice, but who, in course of time and the progress of refinement, ostensibly separated the functions of fool and physician; and while the medical part devolved upon the doctor, the mummery was confined to the merry-Andrew.

Of this Borde—as I have mentioned him—I must add, that merry as he was, and author as he was, of jest-books, and satires, and “books of knowledge,” his eccentricity took another turn later in life, and he practised all the austerities of the Carthusians,—a course of discipline which might perhaps have well prepared him to endure imprisonment in the Fleet prison, where he died in 1549. Some say he poisoned himself; and others tell us that he was not incarcerated for debt:—Wood, however, calls him “a noted poet, a witty and ingenious person, and an excellent physician.”

This little digression, for which I duly apologize, just brings our hero to the door of the “Hotel” at Eastbourne, which magnificently as the word sounds, does not, in point of fact, possess the striking attributes of its more lordly contemporaries. Jack rather liked its unostentatious appearance, and entered it with one of his liveliest expressions of countenance, skipping as usual, rather than stepping out of his chaise into the hall.

“Have rooms?” said Jack; “sitting and bed-room, eh?—all snug and comfortable, and no mistake? Seen my servant down here, with the phaeton, and my things.”

“No, sir,” said the landlady, “I think not. What name sir?”

“Brag,” said Jack; “a young man—light weight—dark mixture frock, leathers and tops, an olive-green phaeton, and pair of bright bays.”

"No, sir" said the hostess; "no such person has been here; perhaps he has gone to 'The Lamb,' or the 'New Inn,' at South."

"Stupid dog!" said Brag; "perhaps he has. I told him 'The Hotel,' as plain as I could speak."

"Shall we send and see, sir?" said the wily landlady.

"I wish you would," said Brag. "Where do you think he is gone?"

"To 'The Lamb,' perhaps, sir," said the mistress of the hotel.

"Couldn't mistake Lamb for Hotel!" replied our hero, looking as much in earnest as if he really had expected the servant and equipage which he so accurately described. "Never mind, I can do without him till to-morrow, so don't fuss yourself on my account. Just show me my room, and I'll order my dinner, and all that, and take a turn while it is getting ready."

Those who are not acquainted with Eastbourne, and more especially, the 'Sea Houses,' which give their name to the *quartier* in which Jack had established himself, can scarcely believe how very agreeable a place it is. It is true there is nothing like gaiety going on; there are no crowded promenades; there are no grand balls—no house in the whole groupe is spacious enough to enable a man to inflict a large party on his friends; but every thing around one is, though humble, clean, fresh, and delightful. The two extreme points of the place at which civilization ends are distinguished by buildings which in other days would have afforded but little gratification to cockney ears. "The Round House" is the *ultima Thule* of the promenade in one direction, and the "Watchhouse" the termination of it at the other. These are, however, but local and conventional terms, and in the height of the season you will generally find some delightful family located in the one, and at all seasons a gallant sea-officer stationed at the other.

To enjoy the quiet of this peaceful village, for such it is, after all the worries of the few preceding days, and "sniff the briny," which although he did not admire its beauties, he admitted was "uncommon refreshing," was Jack's first wish:—it might perhaps give him an appetite; and then his wine would serve as a Lethean draft after it; and then in the morning he should get up calm, and cool, and comfortable, and seek his fortune at the Library, which to cockneys is always a resource, and to Jack could not fail to be a very important one. Accordingly, he hastened his "twilight," and having calculated the length of time required for dressing his fish and fowl, descended the stairs, looking all fresh and smart, or, to use his own favourite phrase, "as nice as nip!"

"How long," said Jack, pulling up his collars,— "how long will it be before my dinner is ready?"

"About half an hour," said the landlady.

"What do you call your best wine here?" asked Jack.

"All very good, sir, I believe," was the reply.

"What claret have you?" said Jack.

"Very good Lafitte, sir—Château Margaut," said mine hostess.

"Oh—oh!" said Jack,—“any good Madeira—eh!—London Particular, and no mistake!”

"Our Madeira, sir," said the landlady, "I am afraid is not quite so good."

"Port and sherry, I suppose?" said Jack—"Kitchen wines, eh?"

"Both excellent in their way, sir," said the landlady. "We get our port from Paxton, and our sherry from Toone."

"Very good names," said Jack. "And champagne or hock?"

"Both, sir," replied the landlady.

"Any ice in the house?"

"Yes, sir"

"Oh, very well," said Jack; "I'll—see about it. My man is not come, I suppose?"

"No, sir."

"Nor the carriage?"

"No, sir."

"In half an hour, you say, dinner will be ready?" said Jack.

"Yes, sir," said the hostess.

"I like dining early by way of a change," said Jack; "something new after the infernal late hours of London. I'll be in time, rely upon it, and no mistake."

Saying which, he walked into his sitting-room, adjusted his hat on one side of his head, pulled up his collars, and just giving himself a sort of satisfactory shake before the looking-glass, sallied forth, scarcely deigning to look at a man, of about his own size, dressed in black, whose innocent mind he had been endeavouring to astonish, by the dialogue which he had just concluded with the landlady on the subject of the wines, and the ice, and the servant, and the carriage.

The man of about his own size, in black, however, was not to be so passed over. He came forward as Jack advanced, and rather startled our hero by a peculiar interest which seemed to pervade his countenance, as Jack moved across the hall towards the door with an air and manner something between a swagger and a wriggle, smacking, as usual, his boots with his "remarkably small whip," and thinking he was doing it all right, and no mistake!

Jack cast a sort of contemptuous glance over the figure of his fellow guest, with which he could scarcely avoid *favouring* him, since he seemed to force a notice of some sort from him. Who he could be, Jack could not exactly comprehend;—In black—with a remarkably bad hat;—too smart for an undertaker—not smart enough for a parson—Village doctor perhaps, looking out for patients. No matter. Heads or Tails, what did it signify to him?



And away went Jack, baffling the breeze, which blew right in his face, and came strong upon him as he "opened" the sea between Weston's shop and the library.

There were but few promenaders, and in the library not more than three persons; one of whom was peeping through the little hole of a kaleidoscope, another poring over the list of subscribers, and the third, standing just inside the half-opened door beating the old gentleman's tattoo with his fingers upon the window-pane. Jack looked in, enjoyed for a moment the well-known smell of green baize, white-brown paper, kid gloves, Windsor soap, varnish, and lavender-water, with which such gay receptacles are generally redolent; then turned out again, and walked as far as he could in the direction of Beachy Head, the state of the tide and the nature of the shore limiting his excursion thitherwards, however, to about two hundred yards.

Having done this, he followed the example of the other strollers, and walked back again, extending his march beyond Mrs. Gilbert's "Tea Room," and the life-boat, and concluding it by entering the garden of the hotel, which opens to the beach, by which route he regained his parlour, satisfied that the air was remarkably bracing, and the company of the place as select as he could possibly wish it to be.

The cloth was laid; everything prepared; and nothing appeared to be wanting but the summons—the rub of the lamp to produce the Genius. Jack rang the bell;—all was ready. The smoking fish came, leaping like a salmon to the board, and in five minutes Jack was seated fork in hand.

"What wine do you take, sir?" said the waiter, who had heard the conversation upon that particular subject which had passed between the guest and his mistress in the hall.

"Wine?" said Jack, "why, half a pint of sherry; and bring some small beer, if it's very good."

"Yes, sir," said the waiter, and, it is needless to add, did as he was bid.

Jack certainly had been upset by the last night's rencontre; but still, as his stomach filled, and the genial influence of the cruetfull of Toone's super-excellent began to operate, he again reared his drooping head; and resolving to care nothing for what could not be helped, ordered a bottle of old port, and a bit of fire; for although the season was young, yet the weather was coldish, and he felt chilly, and besides, as one of the most beautiful women that ever fell into solitude in the midst of a crowd once said to me—"To anybody who lives so much alone as I do, a cheerful fire is company." These simple words sounded to *me* deeply pathetic, and conveyed to my mind an idea of the wretchedness of involuntary seclusion, which more eloquent language, or a finer-turned

phrase would perhaps not have produced. That fair creature, however, once the gem-like centre of the circle she brightened and adorned, is gone to her long account; and if retribution were to be meted out to mortals in *this* world, she would nearly have atoned for all her faults before she left it.

"Put down some dessert," said Jack, "clap a log on the grate, draw the curtains, and bring me the London paper."

"Yes, sir," said the waiter, who implicitly obeyed the commands he received, but still looked somehow suspiciously at Jack, not as doubting his respectability and solvency, or even questioning the bright vision of the groom and the phaeton, but as if expecting that something was likely to happen in the course of the evening to mar the comfort of the 'cheerful fire-side.'"

The paper came; Jack occupied two chairs, and it would be doing the vain simploton injustice to deny that as he sipped his wine his thoughts reverted to his sister Kate. The chain, it is true, contained many links, and one end of it was riveted to the counter of the candle-shop; but still there is no man so callous, or so heartless, but that at certain moments he "feels:"—Jack *did* feel, and even went the length of repenting many things which he had done, and regretting that he had not done many others which he had neglected, and was really getting quite amiable. There certainly *was* a reason for this—he was alone,—and had no game to play.

From the reverie or rather slumber into which the heat of the fire, the strength of the port wine, and the very long leading articles of the newspaper which he was reading without understanding one syllable contained in them, had thrown him, he was aroused in about three quarters of an hour by the re-appearance of the waiter, who said that a gentleman wished to speak a few words to him.

"To me?" said Jack.

"Mr. Brag, I believe, sir," said the waiter.

"Yes," said Brag, "in course, that's my name, and no mistake. What is the gentleman's name?"

"I don't know, sir," said the waiter. "He is outside, sir."

"Desire him to come in," said Jack, who concluded it was either the master of the ceremonies to nail him for a subscription, or the apothecary to secure a patient, or perhaps some of the parochial authorities desirous of knowing whether he would wish the bells at "South," as they call it, to announce his arrival at the Sea Houses.

The waiter opened the door, and all Jack's suspicions were confirmed when he beheld the man about his own size, dressed in the shabby-genteel black, whom he had entirely astonished about the wines, the ice, the servants; the horses and the carriage,

in the hall before dinner, enter the room with a low bow. The waiter retired; and shut the door.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the shabby-genteel, holding his shocking bad hat in his hand, "I believe, sir, your name is Brag?"

"It is, sir," said Jack.

"Of Lower Grosvenor Street, in the Parish of St. George, Hanover Square, Middlesex," said the stranger.

"Exactly so," said Brag.

"It is very curious, sir," said the stranger, "that I should have been lucky enough to meet with you here. I have been frequently to Grosvenor Street, but the people there, said you never lived there. I heard, sir, you had a house in Surrey, but I never could find out exactly where it was. - We did get a letter saying that the newspaper said you were gone to Dover, and I should have gone over to that place from this, but your arrival here saves me a great deal of trouble, and will make no difference to you, sir."

"No," said Jack, drawing his little legs off the second chair, and sitting upright to look at his visitor,—"but may I just ask why you happen to be so very anxious to see *me*?"

"I am clerk, sir," said the visitor, "to Messrs. Tapps, Tatlock, and Shackleton, of Pump Court, Temple, and have been for these ten days looking out to serve you with notice of action of trespass at the suit of Thomas Grindlestone of Wigglesford, in the county of Herts. We wrote twice to you, sir, but, not getting any answer, and not knowing the name of your solicitor, *my* gentlemen ordered me to look after you at Dover; but as I had some business here, on my way, the minute I heard you asking for your carriage and servant, and mentioning your name, I said to myself—'That's my gentleman.'—Here is the copy of the writ, sir, which I now serve you with."

"Upon my life," said Jack, "I don't know what I have to do with this."

"It's about the steeple chase, sir," said the visitor, "of which you had the management, and which did considerable damage to Mr. Grindlestone's property."

"But," said Jack, "there are hundreds of steeple chases in the course of the year, and nobody is prosecuted."

"That is all according to taste, sir," said the stranger. "Mr. Grindlestone, our client, sir, is not a sporting character, and doesn't exactly see why *you*, as having marked out the line, should have chosen to draw it directly across his property;—even hunting a fox, sir, over another man's grounds, after the case decided by Lord Ellenborough, (Earl of Essex against General Capel, 1809,) is held to be a trespass. In the case of Merest and Harvey, the defendant committed the trespass in the plaintiff's presence after being warned off—the jury there, sir, gave five hundred pounds da-

gages; and Sir Vicary Gibbs, who tried the case, refused a new trial, and said, 'Suppose I had a walk before my house which I had a pleasure in looking at or walking on, would it be allowed that a man should come and walk there to my annoyance, and then offer me a halfpenny in satisfaction, alleging that I had received no actual damage?'

"But what am I to do now, sir?" said Jack.

"Nothing in the world, sir," said the stranger; "just put that slip of paper into your pocket, and the gentleman, whoever he may be, who is concerned for you, will tell you all the rest."

"Sir," said Jack, "I don't understand this at all; I have no gentleman who is concerned for me—nor lady either, as I begin to think; and I don't comprehend it—it's all gibberish—moonshine—nonsense—straight up, right down, and no mistake."

"No, sir, I will not trouble you any farther," said the clerk; "I know there's no mistake—but I have done my duty, sir, and I wish you good evening. I would not have intruded till the morning," added the shabby genteel; "but I have a chance of a cast to Lewes to-night, and I thought it best to lose no time."

"And who are your employers?" said Jack, who had just instinct sufficient to know that he had got himself into a scrape.

"Messrs. Tapps, Tatlock, and Shackleton, of Pump Court, Temple, sir," replied the clerk: "good evening, sir." Saying which, the unwelcome visitor disappeared, and closed the door after him.

This was extremely agreeable; here was Brag saddled with an action for trespass, singled out as the leader of the sport, and all the burthens upon his mind crowned with a lawsuit, and all resulting from his own empty vanity, in putting himself forward as the hero of the day; a piece of absurdity rendered more objectionable to the plaintiff Grindleston, because he thought proper to puff himself into possession of the said plaintiff's property. However, it was of no use thinking it over, then—morning was the time for business; and so Jack, relieved from the presence of the harpy, proceeded to read the paper and drink his port, till he fell again into a profound slumber from which he awoke only to ring the bell, order his candle, and go to bed.

CHAPTER XV.

THE morning again dawned, and again was Brag "up and stirring." He read and re-read the narrow strip of paper which had been fastened upon him by the emissary from Messrs. Tapps, Tatlock, and Shackleton, of Pump Court, and was very little the wiser for the information he derived from its contents. Instinct, how-

ever, made him very much dislike the affair, upon which, he concluded, he must consult some lawyer of his own; but not having such an officer regularly retained in his household, and knowing but little of the routine of legal business, he proceeded, in the first instance, to act upon the directions of the imp from whom he had received the "strip," and put it into his pocket.

During breakfast he seriously repeated the usual fruitless inquiries after his servant and equipage, and received the anticipated negative to his questions with an affectation of high displeasure, strengthened by one of those brief but emphatic exclamations, which, if uttered before one of his Majesty's worshipful justices of the peace, would have subjected him to a fine of five shillings.

Having despatched his morning meal, he repaired to the stables, and ran his eye over the horses which were standing in them,—at times looked knowingly at some of the best,—and spoke technically to the coachmen or grooms about some of the worst. One pair of coach-horses particularly struck his fancy:—To whom did they belong?—was his question to a servant, wearing bright orange plush unmentionables, who was, without coat, waiscoat, or jacket—working away at one of them, polishing him up to a degree of brightness and smoothness very difficult of attainment in horse-skins at the sea-side.

"Whose horses did you say these were?" said Jack.

"Mrs. Peckower's, sir," said the man.

"What!" said Jack—"the lady of my friend Mr. Heneage Peckover of Womans would in Kent?"

"The same, sir," said the servant.

"Is Mr. Peckover dead?" said Jack.

"Not particularly, sir," said the man, continually rubbing and hissing as hard as he well could; "on the contrary, he is as lively as ever."

"Because you said Mrs. Peckover's horses," said Jack.

"Yes," said the man, "we calls everything missus's. What's master's is her's—and what's her's is her own, sir. Master don't much interfere."

"Where are they staying?" said Jack,

"At that house, sir," said the man, stepping out of the stable-door and pointing, "with the bow-window there, sir."

"Oh," said Jack, "I must go and call on them.—Very fine pair of nags as ever I clapped my eyes upon—good colour, shape, and make: fast trotters, I take it."

"Uncommon, sir," said the man, "and step together like winkin."

"All right that," said Jack, "and no mistake:"—and out he walked, not sorry, however much he might wish for retirement, at finding an acquaintance in the place, who was not very well known

either to, or by the persons with whom he, for the present, desired to have no particular connexion.

Jack had met Mr. Peckover out with hounds round London. He was a hale, portly man, of some fifty-six, with rosy cheeks and strong limbs; the voice of a Stentor; and a laugh which, when excited, might be heard "a goodly league at sea."

It is said that men's characters sometimes agree with their names, although James Smith has given us an excellent song to exhibit "the rule of contraries" in this particular. Certain it is, however, that Heneage Peckover, of Womanswold in the county of Kent, Esq. was—tall as he was, broad as he was, heavy as he was and loud as he was—the mere slave of his wife, from whom, it may be necessary to observe, he had derived nearly the whole of the fortune which enabled him to make the figure he made in society. What he originally *had* been, history has not accurately recorded; but the aristocratic character of the former of his two names (christian-name it can scarcely be called) led people to suppose that his connexions must somehow have been of a superior order.

Jack had never seen the lady,—nor indeed had any of the "friends" with whom Mr. Peckover was in the habit of hunting.—Not to hear of her, after having been five minutes in her husband's society, would have been impossible. It was not enough that she directed his conduct and controlled his actions; nor that he paid her every deference whilst in her society, and followed her instructions with the implicit obedience of a well-broken spaniel, whenever she thought fit to fulminate them. The habit of submission was so strongly impressed upon his mind, that it had induced something like a veneration for her opinions and decisions, by which his whole conduct in life was regulated; so that although, when away from her, he really was what may be called a capital jolly country gentleman; and laughed, and joked, in *his* way, with the greatest earnestness and fervour, still he had neither taste nor judgment of his own; and his conversation was therefore made up of continued references to "Mrs. Peckover," and her views, her opinions, her *dicta*, and her decisions upon all subjects, which were rendered the more strikingly absurd to his ordinary companions, inasmuch as they had never seen the lady, nor ever were likely to see her, since she peremptorily declined receiving her husband's sporting acquaintance, the exclusion of whom from *her* house (as she invariably called it,) was the condition alone upon which she permitted him to enjoy what are called the pleasures of the chase.

The extent of the present scene of action was so small, that all the inhabitants of the comfortable Kraal were visible to each other in the course one hour of any one day: and not much more than half that period of time had elapsed, when Jack espied his friend

walking with Colonel Stiffkey, whom he also knew, from having met him occasionally at Mrs. Dallington's. This was rather a drawback to the gratification he experienced in seeing Mr. Peckover, who looked glowingly bright; his rubicund face shining well over a buttoned-up blue coat, "leathers" of the old school, and "tops" to match.

"Bless my soul!—Mr. Brag," exclaimed Peckover; "who the deuce would have thought of finding you here?"

"I might say the same to you, sir," said Jack. "How d'y'e do, sir? Needn't ask—charming well, I am sure."—"How d'y'e do, Colonel?" added Brag, waiting to see what sort of recognition the colonel would afford him.

The Colonel's "Quite well!" was as gracious as possible.

"As for *me*," said Peckover, "Mrs. Peckover says she never saw me looking better. True enough;—I'm hearty and hale, and all *that*—ha, ha, ha! Are you come to stay here, Mr. Brag?"

"For some time, I think," said Brag. "I have just got away from the Ilfracombes, and the Dawlishes, and Lord Tom, who have been at Dover. Lord Tom wanted me to go to Paris to ride his horses, but I know a trick worth two of that—sure of a wrangle wherever he is concerned; so I backed out, smack, smooth, and no mistake."

"Mrs. Peckover says," said Peckover, "that horse-racing is but ticklish work, after all:—too much in the hands of other people—jockeys, trainers, and friends—eh?—ha, ha, ha!"

"I never have been on the turf," said Stiffkey, with an air of self-satisfaction which would have induced anybody who did not know him, to believe that his abstinence had not proceeded from the positive want of money and horses.

"Mr. Brag," said Peckover, "is a capital jockey, if you come to that. Well—where do you dine to-day?"

This question was asked, first, in the hope that Brag was engaged; and secondly, because Peckover flattered himself that he could prevail upon his lady to admit him and the colonel to her table, by explaining to her that the colonel was *not* one of his hunting friends, and concealing from her the fact that Brag *was*.

"I am not engaged anywhere," said Brag—"I'm at the hotel."

"So am I," said the Colonel.

"I'm sure Mrs. Peckover will be delighted to see you," said Heneage. "She dines at six—'because,' as, she says, 'early hours, good air, and plain feeding, are good for one's health'—and I believe it to be so—ha, ha, ha!"

"I shall be most happy," said the Colonel.

"And I," said Jack.

"That's a large ship in the offing," said the Colonel.

"Mrs. Peckover tells me she thinks it's a man-of-war," said

Peckover. "I don't know much about ships, but I dare say it is. She has been watching it through her glass."

"For a sea place," said Jack, "this is uncommon snug—and I like the look of the country round it."

"Why," said Peckover, "Mrs. Peckover's opinion is, that the mixture of trees, and sea, and corn-fields, and downs, and good roads, and fine cliffs, is extremely beautiful. For my own part, I don't profess to know much about such things; but I take it all as it comes. Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's the only way to get on in this world," said the Colonel. "Pray have you been over to Hurstmonceaux?" added the gallant officer.

"No," said Peckover; "Mrs. Peckover went there last Tuesday, I think it was. She has great taste for ruins, and remnants, and relics, and all that. She took over two or three young ladies, the Miss Gubbinses, who are here, and there was no room for me in the carriage, so I staid here, and played billiards with the marker's boy till she came back."

"There seems to be no news in the London papers this morning?" said the Colonel.

"No," said his friend; "Mrs. Peckover tells *me*, that if Russia, Austria, and Prussia were to join against France, the odds would be greatly in favour of the coalition; but I don't trouble my head much about politics. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well," said Brag, "is there anything to see near at hand? Where is what they call 'South,' because I suspect my fool of a servant has lost himself and my phaeton, somewhere in the Wilds of Sussex, and I may, perhaps find him stalled up at 'The Lamb,' I think the hotel people call it."

"Oh, ah!" said Peckover; "South—they call it South, Mrs. Peckover tells me, to distinguish it from East, which they call this. Mrs. Peckover gets all our meat from a butcher at South. I'll walk with you."

"With all my heart," said the Colonel.

"That's right!" said Jack; "I think a toddle along the road will do us good, and no mistake!"

"Mrs. Peckover says walking exercise is the best," said her husband, "yet, somehow, she generally drives about herself; however, I don't pretend to understand these matters. Ha! ha! ha! Come, let's start."

And away the trio went, Jack extremely well pleased with his reception, and resolved to keep quiet and easy, more than ever struck with his fat friend's perpetual reference to his better half, and convinced, by Colonel Stiffkey's manner towards him, that he had not been enlightened in any degree upon the subject of the affair with Mrs. Dallington and Miss Englefield.

The day was delightful, and they had got on the road just as far as where foot passengers generally strike into the fields, when Brag perceived a man, who, by the azure hue of his coat, and the bright orange-colour of his plushes, he knew to be one of Peckover's footmen, coming at what he considered a splitting pace in pursuit of them.

"One of your servants, I think," said Jack.

"Oh," said Peckover, "most probably Mrs. Peckover wishes to be of our party.—Well, Stephen, what is it?"

"My missus, sir," said Stephen, "wants you to come in, if you please."

"Oh, come in, does she?" said the Herculean infant;—"Why doesn't she come out?—it would do her a vast deal more good. What, is she in the house?"

"Yes, sir," said Stephen, "and bid me say she was waiting."

"Why, then, gentlemen," said Peckover, I am afraid I must leave you. I know she has some project for this morning, but I don't pretend to know anything of her movements.—I'm coming, Stephen.—I'll just step home, and if I can get away I'll follow you—only don't mind *me*. Back at six;—don't forget—punctual to the minute, for as Mrs. Peckover says, you can never expect to have a good dinner or a good cook, if you are not punctual—so mind. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Never fear," said Jack; "I'll be at the post, afore the bell rings for saddling, and no mistake."

"And I will be the very shadow of Mr. Brag," said the Colonel.

"That's one of the comforts of matrimony," said the Colonel, after watching Peckover's hurried return homewards: "That gentle giant is tied to his lady's apron string, and beyond its tether, wander he must not."

"I think," said Jack, "if I was as big as he, I should try if I couldn't break it."

"Did you ever see Mrs. Peckover?" said the Colonel.

"Never set eyes on her," replied Jack.

"She is a delicate looking woman," said the Colonel; "her figure small and slight; her nose long, her mouth wide, her voice shrill, and her tongue exhibiting to the curious in 'natural mechanism' the long-sought-for desideratum of perpetual motion. The only relief she gives that active member, or her husband, is when she is sulky, upon which occasions she keeps him sitting in her boudoir, or wherever it may be, the whole day, without letting him stir out, or speaking a syllable to him while he stays at home."

"But why does not he kick?" said Jack;—"rebel; run rusty?"

"Because he believes her to be the cleverest woman in all the world," said the Colonel. "As for disputing the excellence of her taste, or doubting the infallibility of her opinions, he would as

soon think of flying; and such has been the nature of her management in breaking him in, that he does not in the slightest degree consider her tyranny as oppressive; on the contrary, he thinks her so far above every other living creature, that his homage and submission are voluntary tributes to her perfection."

"I suppose," said Jack, "we must not venture to contradict anything she says at dinner, even in the way of joke?"

"You need not be apprehensive of her doing anything in that line," said the Colonel. "I once, and only once, dined with them at their place *Womansworld*, and she took offence in the early part of dinner because Peckover drank wine with somebody without asking her which wine he ought to drink; and from that moment she stopped her loquacity dead short, and moped for the rest of the evening."

"Wouldn't it be a good thing to affront her a little at starting?" said Jack; "perhaps it might give him a chance of throwing in a word."

"Not a bit," said the Colonel: "if she won't speak, he mustn't; so we should have to keep up the ball between us, unless one or two of those Miss Gubbinses, who are a good deal with her, should happen to be of the party. However, we must trust to Fate.—You say you are just from Dover?"

"Came off the day before yesterday," said Jack.

"Did you happen to see some old friends of mine there?" said the Colonel—"the Gunnersburys?"

"Oh, yes," said Jack; "I dined there the day before I left. Very pleasant party. The Dullinghams, and Sir Henry Rockley, and a Mr. and Mrs. Carnaby. What a queer body Lady Gunnersbury is!"

"Monstrous spirits," said the Colonel.

"Talk of perpetual motion," said Jack; "I think she'd give Mrs. Peckover two stone and a distance, and beat her in a canter."

"Yes, she is an entertaining old lady," said the Colonel.

"To be sure, how she did go on!" said Jack.

"It is through her," said Stiffkey, "that I am connected with the family. She is my great-aunt; and I mean to pay them a visit before I go to London. Indeed, George Gunnersbury has more than half promised to come over to me here, and in that case we should return together. He is a capital fellow!"

"Oh, very pleasant indeed!" said Jack.

"He has more real fun about him when he is in a good humour, than anybody I know," said Stiffkey.

"Yes," thought Jack, "may be so"—at the same moment congratulating himself that the Colonel's development of his connexion with the family, saved him from something very like a repetition of the Dullingham affair, out of which he had so recently escaped.

"By the way," said the Colonel, wishing, as it should seem, to vary the topics of conversation, to suit Jack's particular taste, "when did you see our fair friends, the widow and her sister?"

"The day before I left town," said Jack; "I—in fact—I thought it better to—withdraw. I like candour—hate what I call sham—abraham. Give me sincerity—all straight up, right down, and no mistake. And I thought in my own mind that they were playing what I call a shuffling game. It looked somehow like a regular cross."

"I don't exactly see," said the Colonel.

"Why, what I say, Colonel, is this," said Jack;—"if you mean a thing, say so; and if you don't mean it, don't go on worriting and fretting people about nothing. I saw that Lydiard and Rushton,—two deuced good fellows in their way—were making themselves miserable about these two females, so I says to Lydiard, saysd, 'Put a face upon this; don't be trifled with:—'—and I said the same to Rushton:—and, in course,—as I know the sex, and shouldn't speak without knowing regularly what I was about,—they took my advice: and I'm sure—as you know all the parties, and,—in course, we are tiled—I brought the whole thing about, smack, smooth, and no mistake whatever:—opened their eyes to their own situation; and the night before I left town,—which I did in uncommon high glee at having made up the matter,—I set them down to supper, two regular couple, all wrangles over—and *they*, matched for life as nice as nip, and no mistake."

It was Jack's misfortune, whenever he became eloquent, to fall immediately into his own peculiar style of oratory; and this burst, to which he had been encouraged by the colonel's evident ignorance of all the real facts, brought the gallant officer's eyes into an almost full stare of astonishment at the mode in which his voluble, volatile friend expressed himself.

"I have thought sometimes," said the Colonel, "when I have had the pleasure of meeting you there, that you were in the field yourself. It struck me that you thought Miss Englefield's singing very charming."

"So I did," said Jack, still clinging to the *éclat* of having been favoured by anything so charming as Blanche, and yet wishing to convey the idea that he had been smiled on by both—"so I did; but then I was taken uncommonly by Mrs. Dallington's talking. They are both delightful creetchurs! No: I admired them both as a friend—a sincere friend—nothing more; and so I thought the best thing I could do was, to pair them off with the men whom they liked, and who liked them."

"Most marvellous self-denial!" said the Colonel.

By this time they had reached "South," and the colonel accompanied Brag to "The New Inn," and thence to "The Lamb," in or—

der that he might go through the ceremony of enquiring for his "fool of a servant, and his phaeton," which, to do his acting credit, he performed with the greatest apparent earnestness.

These matters adjusted, they returned by a circuitous route, and as they were wending their way through the open gardens at the back of "The Sea Houses," they beheld the glittering equipage of Mrs. Peckover trailing along the road, containing herself and her two favourite friends, the Gubbinses, and proceeding towards Westham and Pevensey."

"Our friend, taking the air," said the Colonel.

"Mr. P. isn't there?" said Jack.

"No, she very seldom takes him out with her," said the Colonel.

"She says he is too big for the inside of the carriage, and she cannot dispense with her footman, who, upon these occasions, shares the box with the coachman. I dare say we shall find him somewhere about; or perhaps she has sent him to pick up laver for her, which is found here in plenty and perfection."

"Well," said Jack, "if I were Mr. Peckover, sooner than stand *that*, I would dig stones in a quarry on my own account."

"There is no accounting for taste," said the Colonel; "besides, there are secrets in all families, and we do not perhaps know what the reciprocal obligations of the parties to each other may be; one thing is certain, he wears his chains merrily. I never saw a man more perfectly happy: however, let us proceed to the library, where, if his lady-wife have not ordered him on some fatigue-party, we shall in all probability find him knocking the balls about as usual, either by himself or with the marker's boy."

Anything makes a pursuit at a watering-place. A glass-blower, whose performances have been before your eyes for years in London, without exciting your attention in the slightest degree; at a watering-place becomes an object of wonder and surprise;—a sick rattle-snake, who would slumber unseen and disregarded in his flannel waistcoat, at the Zoological Gardens in London, is visited with the greatest avidity: and a fish caught the night before, which happens to be two feet longer, or one foot thicker, than fishes of the same kind generally are, attracts a crowd of astonished spectators, and elicits a thousand interesting remarks and observations.

It turned out that Mr. Peckover was not at the library, nor was he gathering laver; on the contrary, he was sitting on a bench facing the sea, at which he was looking wistfully, and evidently much depressed. When he saw Brag and the colonel advancing, he rose to meet them—and they perceived in a moment that something had worried him.

"I am glad I have found you," said he. "Upon my life! I am almost ashamed to say what I am going to say:—Mrs. Peckover tells me that she has engaged herself to go to Hastings to buy some

French things at a smuggling shop, and that she shan't be able to have the pleasure of receiving you at dinner to-day."

"Oh," said the Colonel, "never mind—don't care about *that* :—some other day. As Mr. Brag and I are both staying at the same hotel, we can have our little "*portions*" *tête-à-tête*, and you'll let us come to you when you are quite disengaged."

"I saw the carriage going along the road," said Jack:—"capital *steppers* those bays—never saw better: all right that, sir, and no mistake."

"Why! Mrs. Peckover tells *me*," said the husband, "that the Marquess of Whitechapel says they are the best pair of carriage-horses in London. I don't trouble myself much about carriage-horses—she does:—ha, ha, ha!"

"But suppose," said the Colonel, "as Mrs. Peckover will not be back in time for dinner, that you were to join us, *en garçon*, at the hotel."

"Why," said Peckover, "that would be very agreeable; but if that were to be the order of the day, you two might as well dine with *me en garçon*, at our house; only you see, Mrs. Peckover tells me that she shall be back early, and—"

"Well," said the Colonel, "but see, if we were to dine with you, we might be in the way of Mrs. Peckover and her *dames d'honneur*, when they returned, tired, perhaps, with the excursion; but if you came to us—"

"Ah!" said the obedient husband, "I don't think Mrs. Peckover would like *that*—no, I must be at home to receive her; besides, there are several letters which Mrs. Peckover has desired me to write—and—no, some other time Mrs. Peckover will be most happy to receive you; so let it be as it is. I am very sorry I did not consult her beforehand. I did not know of her engagement; have you forgiven me, gentlemen?"

"Oh, in course," said Jack, "and many thanks for your offer."

"Well," said the Colonel to Brag, "then we had better go to our inn, and order our dinner; we will dine early, if you please."

"Whenever you like," said Jack. "I'm always agreeable, and no mistake."

Jack—upon whose heart or mind, events which would have been of killing interest to others, made no deep impression—was so pleased by the encouragement of Colonel Stiffkey, that he entirely "forgot his own griefs." The melancholy fate of his sister, now and then flashed across his mind, but since he had ascertained the nature of her defection, he was less anxious for a letter from his mother, upon the subject. His defeat at the widow's had almost become a matter of joke with him; his rejection by Lord Tom was counterbalanced by the receipt of the money he had recovered from him, and so upon casting his eye over the balance-sheet, the debtor

and creditor sides seemed pretty equal; and just now the turn lay rather on the credit side, since he had made good his footing with his fashionable companion.

Still, one of those clouds which must almost constantly hang over the heads of quacks and pretenders, was rising in the horizon, in the shape of the arrival of young Gunnersbury. To quit Eastbourne, where he had strangely enough secured the society of such a man as Stiffkey, was most painful. Stiffkey looked down with an air of placid contempt upon the few inhabitants of Sea Houses, and yet he strolled about familiarly with Jack. This was agreeable in the highest degree to the little man's vanity, although really and truly the gay colonel fell into the association without reflecting or thinking about it for one moment. He had met Brag in good society, and in places where he felt evidently at home; he had heard Lord Tom speak of him in high terms, as what is called a "sporting chap," and, moreover, he was somebody to talk to. There can be little doubt if a more aristocratic friend had arrived, Jack would have been cast off; for the colonel was one of those who, soaring eagle-high above the Brags of Jack's school, was known as one of the most decided tuft-hunters about town.

The colonel, too, observed with great care the different grades and degrees of the peerage in the selection of the invitations which he received; like Brag, he possessed, only upon the greater scale, what Foote calls, "the paltry ambition of levying and following titles; the poverty of fastening upon men of distinction in public, for no other reason but because of their rank, adhering to Sir John till the baronet is superseded by my lord, quitting the puny peer for an earl, and sacrificing all three to a duke."

It is greatly to be lamented in the present much-complained-of—how justly I do not pretend to decide—absence of talent in dramatic writing, that the rich and abundant humour of Foote, should, because it is certainly overlaid by much of that, which, in these days of delicacy and refinement would not be endured upon the stage, be altogether lost. Having quoted a line or two from one of his comedies, illustrative of Colonel Stiffkey's passion for tufts, I cannot resist the temptation of extracting that part of the scene, in the "Lame Lover," in which he justifies the young lady's expressed opinion of his addiction to titles, and practically works it out. The passage is curious as well as humorous—humorous, because the satire strikes at all ages; and curious, inasmuch as in twenty lines it familiarises us with customs and habits characteristic of the time at which it was written (the year 1770), of which now no trace or vestige remains.

Sir Luke, the tuft-hunter, is on the stage, with Serjeant Circuit and Charlotte, a servant enters and delivers a card to Sir Luke.

SIR LUKE.

(*Reads*) "Sir Gregory Goose desires the honour of Sir Luke Limp's company to dine. An answer is desired."—Gad-so! a little unlucky—I have been engaged for these three weeks.

SERJEANT.

I find Sir Gregory is returned for the corporation of Fleeces'em.

SIR LUKE.

Is he?—Oh, ho!—that alters the case.—George, give my compliments to Sir Gregory, and say I'll certainly come and dine there.—Order Joe to run to Alderman Inkle's, in Threadneedle-street: sorry can't wait upon him; but confined to my bed for two days with the influenza.

CHARLOTTE.

You make light, Sir Luke, of this sort of engagements?

SIR LUKE.

What can a man do? These fellows (when one has the misfortune to meet them) take scandalous advantage; teasing one with, "Pray when will you do me the honour, Sir Luke, to take your mutton with me? Do name the day." What's to be done?—they are as bad as a beggar, who attacks your coach going uphill, there's no getting rid of either without a penny to one, and a promise to the other; not but that upon these occasions there is no man in England more punctual than—"

Enter a servant, who gives SIR LUKE a letter.—From whom?

SERVANT.

The Earl of Brentford, Sir Luke. The servant waits for an answer.

SIR LUKE.

Answer!—By your leave, Mr. Serjeant and Charlotte. (*Reads.*) "Taste for music!"—umph!—"Mons. Dupont—fail—dinner upon table at five." Gad-so!—I hope Sir Gregory's servant is not gone.

SERVANT.

Immediately, sir, on receiving the answer.

SIR LUKE.

Run after him, as fast as you can. Tell him—"quite in despair:—recollect an engagement that can't in nature be missed:—and be back in an instant. [*Servant runs out.*]

CHARLOTTE.

You see, sir, the knight must give way to my lord.

SIR LUKE.

No: it isn't that, my dear Charlotte. You saw that it was quite

an extempore business. No, it isn't for the title; but, to tell you the truth, Brentford has more talent than any man in the world: it is *that* which makes me fond of his house.

CHARLOTTE.

By the choice of his company he gives an unanswerable instance of *that*.

SIR LUKE.

You are right, my dear girl. But now, to give you a proof of his wit:—Brentford's finances are a little out of repair, which procures him some visits he would very gladly excuse. One morning a Welsh coachmaker came to him with his bill; my lord had him up. "You are called Mr. Lloyd, I think?" said Brentford. "At your lordship's service, my lord." "What!—Lloyd with an L?" "With an L, my lord," said the coachmaker. "Because," said my lord, "I have heard that in *your* part of the world, Lloyd and Floyd are synonymous—the very same names." "Always, my lord," said the coachmaker. "That," says my lord, "is rather unlucky: for, you must know, I am paying off my debts alphabetically; and in four or five years you *might* have come in with an F; but I can give you very slight hopes for your L."—Ha, ha, ha!—*(Enter a servant abruptly, who runs against SIR LUKE.)*—Can't you see where you are running? you rascal!

SERVANT.

Sir, his grace the Duke of —

SIR LUKE.

Grace!—where is he?—where?

SERVANT.

In his coach at the door. If you a'n't better engaged, would be glad of your company to go into the City, and take a dinner at Dolly's.

SIR LUKE.

In his own coach, did you say?

SERVANT.

Yes, sir.

SIR LUKE.

With the coronets—or——?

SERVANT.

I believe so.

SIR LUKE.

There's no resisting that:—bid John run to Sir Gregory Goose's.

SERVANT.

He is already gone to Alderman Inkle's.

SIR LUKE.

Then do you step to the knight's. Hey!—no—you must go to my lord's. Hold, hold!—no—I have it:—step first to Sir Greg's; then pop in at Lord Brentford's, just as the company are going to dinner.

SERVANT.

What shall I say to Sir Gregory?

SIR LUKE.

Anything!—what I told you before.

SERVANT.

And what to my lord?

SIR LUKE.

What?—why, tell him that my uncle from Epsom——no,—that won't do,—for he knows I don't care a farthing for *him*. Hey!—tell him—hold!—I have it:—tell him, that as I was getting into my chair, to obey his lordship's commands, I was arrested by a couple of bailiffs, forced into a hackney-coach, and carried to "The Pied Bull" in the Borough.—I beg ten thousand pardons for keeping his grace waiting—but his grace knows my misfor——

And away goes Sir Luke, without taking the slightest notice of either his learned friend the serjeant, or the dear girl Charlotte, both of whom he leaves perfectly satisfied with the justness of the character the latter had drawn of her "lame lover."

The spirit of this bit, and the peculiarities of contemporaneous society which it exhibits, will perhaps excuse the quotation. The duke inviting the knight to a dinner at Dolly's; the knight getting into his chair to go to dine with the earl, and resting his apology upon an arrest by bailiffs, and a transfer to "The Pied Bull" in the Borough, all sound marvellously strange to modern ears: and yet there are still those alive who well remember Foote, and who speak of him as a correct painter of manners, and whose inherent humour received additional brilliancy from his unquestioned power of "holding the mirror up to Nature."

Stiffkey, however, was not Limp, and when he and Jack strolled to the hotel to order their repast, his countenance brightened up considerably when the waiter handed him a letter, which had been sent over by somebody coming from Hailsham, to which place it had been forwarded by the cross-road coach from Dover, and which he in moment recognised as being from George Gunnersbury. His announcement to Jack of this happy arrival was not quite so well received by the little gentleman in the cords as he imagined it might have been.

Jack walked about the room while his new friend was reading the despatch, very much in doubt what the nature of its contents

might be; and hoping, with all possible fervour and earnestness, that at all events it might announce some insurmountable obstacle in the way of the writer's visit to Eastbourne.

"Gad!" said Stiffkey, "George is a capital fellow; he will be here to-morrow afternoon; he writes the best letter of any fellow I know: he is particularly shy to strangers, but when one knows him thoroughly, his sly humour, that I spoke of this morning, is capital. He gives a description of a dinner party they had the other day, which is admirable. He says, 'My dear good father, who is certainly the best-disposed general in his majesty's service, contrives to pick up the oddest tigers imaginable; we had a day or two ago a German baron, who spoke no English, and, as nobody in our family, except my sister Eliza, understands three words of German, the poor gentleman—or, by courtesy—nobleman, had a bad time of it; but we had also a fellow presented to us, under the fostering protection of a worthy friend of ours, who beat anything I had ever seen out of a travelling caravan,—an animal which certainly talked, and was therefore human, otherwise I should have taken it for an astounding cross in the breed between an ape and a horse-jockey: he affronted half the party, after having disgusted all of it, and made his escape from a pelting of decanters and wine-glasses by affecting to save some people from a stranded brig, near which he never went, but, instead of venturing ankle-deep into the water to rescue the sufferers, retired to bed 'half-seas-over,' at least, so I have heard; but of these matters we will discourse more anon. I shall be with you by six at the latest.'"

"Capital fun," said the Colonel, "isn't it? A cross between an ape and a horse-jockey! uncommon good!"

"Deuced funny, indeed!" said Jack, whipping his boots; "that's a capital fellow,—eh? straight up, right down, and no mistake. *We shall* have fun when *he* comes."

The detestation which Mr. George Gunnersbury's personal conduct had engendered in Jack's heart in the first instance, had now grown to its fullest growth; nor was it in the slightest degree qualified by the accidental omission of his name, or that of his introducer, (as Jack called it,) which would certainly have rendered the rest of the day more disagreeable than it promised to be in the company of the colonel. For the next, Jack, "in course," was prepared,—a letter from Town would call him away; and so everything seemed at the moment to turn up well, out of all the ills that threatened him; his mother's answer to his letter from Hythe would, in all probability, come to hand in the morning, which would give an air of consistency to his sudden departure, and satisfy his aristocratic friend of the absolute necessity for breaking up the agreeable party.

After having ordered dinner, the colonel and Jack strolled down

on to the sands, wrote words on the sand with their sticks; sat down on the shingle; then wandered towards the watch-house; then came back and talked to the vestals at the baths,—inquired about laver,—found it too early in the season to have it good; then looked at the half-dozen carriages which were standing in the coach-house of the hotel; then went to Weston's, and bought some gingerbread nuts; then into the Library, and played with a little ball that went into a hole at the top of a twisted tube, and came out at the bottom, and rolled about a little, and at last settled into a hole of its own; then Stiffkey looked through a glass, and saw a schooner pitching disagreeably, and Jack went out and helped a little fatfaced child who wore a straw hat and feather, and trousers, and scarlet morocco slippers, on to the back of a donkey; and then the colonel puffed little pellets out of a pea-shooter, across the shop, at a doll, which one of the young ladies of the establishment immediately removed; and then Jack looked up at a little bay-window where a prettyish girl was sitting, who immediately got up and pulled the blind down; and then they both betook themselves to throwing stones from the beach into the sea, during which operation they had the satisfaction of seeing Mrs. Peckover and her party draw up to the door of *her* house, it then wanting one hour of their time of dining and at least two of that, at which Peckover proposed their dining with *him*. This settled that affair, and convinced them, as Mrs. Peckover intended it should, that into *her* house no such persons as Jack should set foot. The colonel might have been received; but the moment that Mrs. Peckover, with her lynx eyes, perceived Jack's unfortunate white cords and tops, from her balcony, *his* fate was decided. She taxed Peckover with the fact of his being one of his hunting friends, and P. could not endure the trial;—it was so,—and admitted,—but then, Mrs. Peckover knew everything intuitively.

In divers and sundry pursuits, equally interesting and exciting with those which have just been described, the two new friends killed the enemy, until it was time to dress for dinner; they accordingly repaired to their rooms, Stiffkey's servant being in readiness to attend him, and Jack swearing at the incalculable stupidity of his man who was not there to dress *him*. Jack affected to bear it all with good-nature and complacency, and it all went very well till he actually found himself alone, and then it was that he began to calculate whither he should next go,—for go he must; the arrival of the hated Gunnersbury would be the signal for his extinction and extermination; but thought Jack, "At all events, I'm safe till the morning; and then the letter, and all that, will get me clear off, if it comes; and if it don't, I must write one myself."

Accordingly Jack proceeded to dress, and made himself look uncommon nice, with an olive-green coat, and a Pomona-green waist-

coat, and a pair of uncommonly smart black kerseymere trousers, with stockings and shoes to match: in short, he felt that he had done it; and when he made allowance for the absence of a servant, the approbation of his elegant friend would no doubt be unqualified: and so down he went to the dining-room, where, in a few minutes, he was joined by Stiffkey, who without any effort had achieved that, which Jack could never have accomplished with a two-hundred horse power. He looked like a gentleman.

The dinner was served, and put down. Stiffkey proposed some of Toone's sherry, and one bottle of champagne between the two;—should it be *moussu*?—well iced;—certainly—the soup was—soup;—the fish not entirely blameable, and whatever other things there were, were all tolerable,—each in its way. Claret followed the champagne; and in about half an hour after they sat down, they were tranquilly sipping their wine, with a few watering-place pears and cricket-ball peaches by way of dessert, discoursing upon topics the most interesting and agreeable.

"If I stayed here," said the colonel, "I should get some house or lodging; this hotel is all very well, but it isn't quite the thing; and yet I don't know about a house for a single man,—and, probably, I shall go back with George in two or three days."

"There's certainly a difference," said Jack, "between this and the 'Ship' at Dover: the 'Ship' is, in course, the only house fit to go to there: for my own part, I think that is the worst of travelling;—the chances and changes,—and then to be 'run to earth' here without a slavey. It is the very deuce,—eh!—uncommon slow, and no mistake."

"Help yourself to some claret," said the colonel, cracking a biscuit; "yes,—it is a bore to be sure. I think you live in Grosvenor street, when you are in town?—at least I have seen your name on a door there."

"Yes," said Jack; "I'm very little at home;—I'm what you call, everywhere;—I hate being still; whenever I can, I run down to a little place I have out of town, where I shut myself up whenever I am able."

"Have you much wood about your place?" said Stiffkey.

Jack recollected the carpenter's-shop, and said, confidently,—
"Yes, lots."

"Well," said the colonel, "I declare I thought you would have married that Mrs. Dallington."

"No," said Jack; "there are many things more than meet the ear;—there *are* objections,—so I made way for those, who couldn't make their own."

At this moment the waiter entered the room, and announced that the London coach had just arrived, and that a lady and gentleman, on the outside, were inquiring for Mr. Brag.

"For me!" said Jack, a thousand horrid ideas rushing into his brain.

"Yes, sir," said the waiter, "they are in the hall."

This announcement startled Jack most tremendously:—a lady enquiring for him—just arrived. Who could it be?—neither the widow Dallington nor Miss Blanche Englefield—certainly not. But might it not be Anne—Nancy? That she had been most violently agitated at beholding him, was perfectly certain; that the only account he had received of her feelings or wishes as to breaking off their acquaintance for ever, was derived from her husband, who might have assumed a tone which, after all he was not justified by facts in adopting. Perhaps she still loved him,—still resolved to prove her affection: after struggling for years, her firmness had yielded, and she had eloped from her new husband to pass the rest of her life with him.

The first flash of this thought was delightful: interest—adventure—escape—pursuit—vanity—notoriety—action for crim. con.—damages—a duel—"a bullet in the thorax"—all whirled through his well-curled head, as he jumped from his seat at table to shield and screen the interesting object of his hopes and wishes from the gaze of Stiffkey, until he was quite sure of his bird;—when, before he could reach the door, his eyes were greeted, and his ears astounded, by the appearance of his exemplary mother, and a cry of "Jack, my boy, how are you?" uttered by that respectable matron.

"My dear ma'am," said Jack, almost petrified, and extending his arms,—not for an embrace, but to endeavour to prevent her farther entrance into the room—"what on earth has brought you here?"

"The stage-coach," said the old lady. "Come, get out of the way; let us come in and sit down."

Saying which, she pushed by her son, to the astonishment of Stiffkey, who immediately rose from his seat.

"Don't disturb yourself, sir," said the lady; "there's plenty of room:—only coming outside, the wind blows up all about one, and I'm as cold as charity—though Jim made me have a glass of hot rum and water at the last place we stopped at."

"Very nice beverage, ma'am," said Stiffkey, with one of his most graceful bows.

"My dear ma'am," said Jack, "wouldn't you rather have another room?" We have scarcely finished dinner, and it would be more comfortable to have a sitting-room to yourself."

"They haven't got another sitting-room disengaged," said the lady; "Jim asked them. No matter: what's good enough for you, Jack, is good enough for me; so this will do for us till bedtime."

"My dear colonel," said Jack—

"My dear sir," said Stiffkey, "no apologies. I am too glad to see any friends of yours—if I don't intrude."

"Intrude!" said the lady—"not a bit: we have no secrets, sir. To be sure, things have turned out queerish: however, you have as much right here as we, and we as you—so we won't make no words of that. Why, you dine late, Jack!"

"No, on the contrary, rather early," said Jack, perfectly at a loss what to do, overcome by the unexpectedness of the visit, from its being so particularly ill-timed, and by the malicious determination which Stiffkey had too evidently formed of not stirring: indeed, the announcement of the fact, that there was no other sitting-room disengaged, would of itself have justified his remaining in what really was his own apartment, even if he had not wished to stay out a scene which promised him some amusement.

"Jack," said the lady, "I want you just to look out and see if Jim is getting in all the bundles and things."

"Who is Jim?" said Jack in an under tone.

"Jim Salmon," said the lady.

"What! is he with you?"

"Yes," said his mother, "where else should he be?"

At this moment Jem made his appearance, dressed in a tight light green coat, and a buff-waistcoat, with striped blue and white cotton trousers, made tightish to his plump figure, a coloured check handkerchief round his neck, and a white hat stuck on one side of his head, with a bunch of whitish-red curls sticking out from under it.

"Ah!" said Jem, "Brag, how d'ye do?—"didn't expect us, I reckon—skimming down here—eh? Tisty would come—agreeable surprise—twig?"

"Very agreeable, indeed!" said Brag, drawing back somewhat indignantly from the familiar approach of the *ex-deoant* shopboy.

"Have you got all the parcels up to the bed-room, J. S.?" said the lady.

"Yes, Titsy," said Jem.

"Got the umbrella, J. S.?" said the lady.

"No, Titsy," replied Jem, "but I'll be after it in no time—twig?"

Jack's dismay and mortification had now risen to a considerable height. What could have induced his mother to make Jem Salmon her travelling companion?—what could have induced her to undertake the journey?—or what Jem could mean by calling his respectable parent "Titsy," were to him questions unsolvable. One thing, however, appeared necessary: the old lady had evidently planted herself for the evening where she was; Stiffkey, who had

scarcely begun his wine, and had no engagement elsewhere, had quietly deposited himself in an arm-chair: Jack, therefore, felt it absolutely essential to introduce the colonel to their fair visiter, resolving, afterwards, to check her in her conversation, so as to prevent the developement of all the real circumstances of the case, and trust to chance and impudence to wriggle through and out of this most "untoward affair."

"This, Colonel," said Jack, "is my mother:—Colonel Stiffkey, madam."

Mutual bows ratified the treaty.

"I say," said the lady, "put a chair for Jim. P'raps, he is taking a drop of something."

"Mr. Salmon, ma'am," said Brag—"is he coming in?"

"I s'pose so," said the lady.

"Oh!" said Brag.

"Here he is," said the lady. "All right now, Jim?"

"Yes, Titsy," said Jem.

Jack's astonishment at the repetition of this "familiar word" was too great to admit of concealment, and accordingly betrayed itself in his countenance.

"Ah!" said his mother, "that's it—isn't it, Jim? He doesn't know all."

"No," said Jem—"don't twig, Titsy."

"I told you, John, I should surprise you one of these days," said his mother:—"J. S. and I are married!"

"Married!" exclaimed Jack.

"Yes," said Jem, "Titsy is Mrs. Salmon—d'ye twig?"

"My dear mother," said Jack, "are you serious?"

"No, Jack," replied Mrs. James Salmon,—for such she really was,—“never less serious in my life since your daddy died. All true:—Jim and I were married last Friday was a week at Hornsey church, and passed the honey-day—we couldn't stop out longer on account of the business—at 'The Sluice House.'”

"This is really a surprise!" said Stiffkey, sipping his claret, looking, how—it is impossible to describe.

Jack was, as Major Downing says, "catawampously stumped," and could say nothing.

"It oughtn't to be, sir," said Mrs. Salmon, addressing herself to the dandy. "Jack knowed well enough what a lone life I led. He never came near me—never, except for what you could get, Jack—did you? He advised me to marry, sir—and I could tell you a pretty story about *that*, if I liked—eh! Jack?—the pickle-shop. Well, so things went on, till at last—praise afore people's faces sometimes spoils them—I took Jim for better or worse."

"A very prudent resolve, indeed, ma'am," said the Colonel, taking a huge pinch of snuff.

"My dear Colonel," said Jack, "I am sure we ought to apologise for troubling you with our family affairs. I wish—eh!—isn't there any other room—are you sure?"

"A'nt.I?" said Jem—"first thing as I axed about—twig?"

"Get yourself something warm, Jim," said the ancient bride: "I'm sure if the cold once gets into your poor little stomach, you'll have no rest all night. I know what it is myself to be troubled with cold:—and I tell you what, Johnny, we shall want a bit of something by way of supper; for though we had three or four mutton-shops at Godstone, which were very nicely done, and fine meat too, and uncommon fat, still that was some time ago—and I get peckish at night somehow."

"Fat!" said Mr. Salmon—"yes, they *were* fat—reminded me of the shop, Brag—twig?"

"I should venture to recommend," said the colonel with the most studied politeness, "something to drink—a glass of claret—or——"

"Oh, Lor' no!" said Mrs. Salmon, "no claret for me, sir: as I used to say to my poor dear first—Jack's father—don't talk to me of claret: it's a waste of time as well as of money to drink them sort of thin stuffs! If Jack was to have behaved like what he is, he might have asked me to take some kind of refreshment before this; for since the rum and water at—what do they call that last place we stopped at, Jemes?"—

"Wholesome, Titsy," said the bridegroom.

"Hailsham, mother,—Hailsham," said Jack, "is the name of the place."

"I haven't had the least drop as is, in my mouth, since Godstone," continued Mrs. Salmon.

"And there," said Salmon, "the hale was uncommon 'eavy,"

"What! ma'am," said Stiffkey, "had you a storm, coming down?"

"No, no," said Jack,—who, although he could not, as his mother would have said, "exasperate" the *h* himself, was nervously alive to the absurdity of anybody else who laboured under a similar incapacity—"ale—the ale was heavy."

"Come, Mr. Brag," said the Colonel, "the wine is with you."

"Yes," said Jack, "and I'm not the man to stop it—eh? I like it to go—keep circulating, as we say, right up, straight down, and no mistake?"

"What do they charge, John, for claret here?" said Mrs. Salmon, addressing her son.

"Can't say, I am sure," said Jack.

"I say," said Salmon, leaning over towards his wife, with his hand up to his mouth to hide a very audible whisper—"that's it

—they never pay!—twig? But, I say, Titsy, what will you have—something hot?”

“Whatever you like, dear,” said the respectable matron.

“I tell you what,” said Salmon, “I’ll just go out and brew for you myself. I know your taste—eh?—don’t I? Sugar, rum, nutmeg—eh?—twig?”

With this most affectionate speech Mr. Salmon left the room, Jack regularly used up, and the colonel, who was now convinced that his particular friend must be the identical creature described in Gunnersbury’s letter from Dover, having thrown himself back in his chair, waited to hear what might happen next.

“Sad business about Kitty!” said Mrs. Salmon.

“Yes, mother,” said Jack, “but don’t you think we might as well defer any discussion of that sort till the morning.”

“Why,” said Mrs. Salmon, “I don’t know; if the gentleman is *your* friend, there’s no harm speaking out before him,—and I can’t stop here long. I thought I would surprise you; and I think a bit of a—washing to-morrow in the sea won’t do me no harm. It’s now two-and-thirty—aye, let me see, more than that—five-and-thirty years since I was in a bath of any kind, and I thought if I could manage to see *you*, and tell you all about my wedding, and talk over poor Kitty’s business, and get a bit of a wash, all under one, it would be doing a great deal; and as the whole front of the shop has been new painted, and James has had all those dangling dips, which you didn’t like, taken down—I said to him, ‘Jim,’ says I, ‘now we’ve got this letter from John, what d’ye say of a bit of a holyday till the stink of the paint goes off, and then we can tell him all, how, and about it?’ Don’t you think I was right?”

“Perfectly, ma’am,” said Jack, “perfectly—only I don’t quite comprehend what you are talking about.”

“I say, sir,” said Mrs. Salmon, appealing to the Colonel, who was enjoying the scene, and gathering in, all he could collect, wherewith to amuse his friend Gunnersbury when he should arrive—“isn’t that good? John’s father and I carried on a most excellent business for five-and-twenty years:—I’ve got the shop-cards in my pocket now, with the new name introduced—‘Salmon, successor to Brag:’—and yet he doesn’t comprehend what I am talking about when I tell him about new painting the shop, and dowsing the dangles, as Jim says.”

“My dear mother,” said Jack, “hadn’t you better go to bed? I assure you this travelling—eh?—don’t you think—it has upset you—?”

“Upset! no,” said Mrs. Salmon, “I’m not going to bed at half-past seven o’clock to please the pope—no, nor the lord-mayor neither: I’m going to have a nice bit of sum’mut for supper. Here,

John, jump up and open the door—I hear Jim knocking : he has got the grog, or whatever it is.”

Jack, utterly discomfited, did as he was bid.

“Scaldings !” cried Mr. Salmon, his father-in-law—“scaldings !—here it is, Titsy, as hot as hot. Mind your eye, Brag—shut the door : that’s right—clever lad—eh ?—twig?”

Things had gone so far at this period of the business, that Jack, seeing it was perfectly impossible longer to blind the colonel to the real state of the case, gave himself up in despair, and felt convinced that the morning must afford him safety in flight. The coolness of Stiffkey during the whole of the proceedings, the unbounded civility with which he treated the old lady, the dignified goodnature with which he permitted Mr. Salmon to tread over his feet, and even scatter the “honey-dew” of the hot mixture, which he had himself prepared and brought into the room, over his shins, killed Jack, who knew by experience the mode in which good-breeding receives the coarsenesses and vulgarities of the world, and saw that the whole fabric of his favour with the colonel, in erecting which he had passed the entire day, was fast crumbling to atoms.

“Shall we have some more wine ?” said the colonel to Brag, doing the elegant with as much unaffected grace as if Jack’s mother had been a duchess who had married a fool for the sake of his title.

“As you like, colonel,” said Jack, “only I fear—”

“Fear nothing,” said Stiffkey, “I never was happier ; and if I don’t bore you——”

“Oh !” said Jack bowing.

“Not in the least, sir,” said Salmon, “we are too happy to have you stay. I’ve always heard say that it is one of the great advantages of these watering-places getting into genteel company—eh !—twig ?”

Jack could have annihilated the shopboy, although he *was* his father-in-law.

“But, as I was saying, John,” said Mrs. Salmon, “because, as the gentleman tell us, we *may* speak out before *him*—poor Kitty made a bad mess of it ; she was always a wayward girl,—she quite run away from George, at last,—so he writes me,—went and lived with other people,—just as it happened ;—all came from drinking, John,” here the old lady mended her draught. “Wasn’t it shocking, sir ?”

“Dreadful ma’am !” said Stiffkey, “very dreadful.”

“My dear mother,” said Jack, “don’t trouble the colonel.”

“The trouble is a pleasure,” said Stiffkey ; “some unfortunate creature, who, being in the habit of drinking, I suppose, ran away from her husband : a thing that will happen, ma’am, amongst servants even of the best character.”

"Servants, sir?" cried Mrs. Salmon.

"My dear mother," said Jack, "never mind."

"But I *do* mind, John," said the lady, who had just arrived at a point of obfuscation, at which the main points under discussion are always forgotten, and the minor incidents shine forth most brilliantly—"why should the gentleman call *my* daughter Kitty a servant?—she never was a servant! she made a foolish match,—ran away with a serjeant—a reglar common soger,—and then ran away *from* him,—all ill treatment, sir, and the heat of the climate;—and—" here Mrs. Salmon burst into a flood of tears; whereupon, Jem, in order to elighten the Colonel, and utterly annihilate Jack, gave him a familiar tap on the shoulder, and said, in a confidential tone, "bolted,—altogether—quite—entirely,—twig?"

The Colonel drew back shrinkingly from the unexpected familiarity, and signified by a distant bow that he was sufficiently aware of the circumstances to which the lady had so feelingly alluded.

"However," said Mrs. Salmon, recovering, "what's done can't be undone; she is now gone to her long home, and it's of no use raking up old grievances: she had a good education, and made a bad use of it; and what's more, she was cheated into marrying him; and Nance Brown,—she was at the bottom of it, and yet she has contrived to get up in the world; and so has George himself,—how, I don't pretend to say."

"My dear mother," said Jack, "let us talk of something else; it cannot be very entertaining to the colonel to hear all our grievances."

"Entertaining!" said Mrs. Salmon, "I'm sure I don't mean to entertain anybody. When I feels, I speaks; and why shouldn't I, John?—an't it natural for a mother to feel?"

"Don't take on so, Titsy," said Salmon. "There's some cold-boiled leg of mutton and pickles coming; they are only waiting to get a bit of potato mashed. I didn't forget to order your early supper,—twig?"

"You are a kind-hearted creetur," said Mrs. Salmon to her husband, "and that makes one feel neglect from others the more; however, we won't talk about that. J. S. dear, tell John what alterations we are going to make at home."

"To be sure," said Jem: "I say, Brag, you know that big copper on the left-hand of the melting-house? I mean to have that put farther back, and git a door made into the lane, behind the cart-house, so as we can bring the fat in all-reg'lar, without coming through the front-shop,—twig?"

"Yes, yes," said Jack, "a very good arrangement; and no mistake."

"Then, I mean to clap a sky-light on the top of the back-parlour," continued Mr. Salmon, "which will make it uncommon lively to what it was. Why, in the old gentleman's time, when I

was a bit of a boy, it used to be as dark and as dismal as the Pleni-potentiary on Milbank,—twig?"

"And round it, John," said Mrs. Salmon, "I mean to have ever so many flower-pots with gerenums, and fooshies, and you can't think how nice they will look in the summer if the cats don't knock 'em down in the night."

"Here's the mutton, Titsy," said Jem.

And sure enough, in came the waiter, accompanied by a female assistant with a tray, on which the promised leg appeared, with pickles and other condiments,—a dish of mashed potatoes, and a plate of chopped onions. The maid spread out a second table, and speedily dressed it in a snowy cloth: the waiter handed and arranged the viands; and while doing so, announced that some hot chops were on their way.

"Waiter, why don't you bring us another bottle of claret?" said Stiffkey, to Jack's most perfect and entire mortification; who, with all his vanity and self-love, could not shut his eyes to the certainty that his elegant friend Stiffkey was merely prolonging his stay, in order to be amused at his expense; and equally well aware that his mother and the creature whom he was told was his father-in-law, would, in the course of the evening, afford him as much entertainment as he could reasonably expect.

"Now, Titsy," said Mr. Salmon, "let me put you a chair by the table,—ready ag'in the chops come. I suppose it's a compliment to ask you to join us?" added the engaging Jem, himself to Colonel Stiffkey, and addressing Jack.

"We have just dined," said Colonel Stiffkey, with the most imperturbable gravity.

The old bride and young bridegroom having drawn close to the board, Jack considered he might contrive to manage a few minutes' explanatory conversation with the colonel, and therefore drew his chair nearer to him, as if with a view of facilitating, what an Irish gentleman would call,—the circulation of the bottle between the two.

"To be sure," whispered Jack whose whole character for smartness and sprightliness, and that sort of slang conversation in which he ordinarily indulged, had been completely destroyed by the appearance of visitors, not only unexpected *then*, but never to be expected in their present relative position—"To be sure, Colonel, there *are* odd things in the world. Who, when we sat down here, would have expected this curious coincidence. By Job! what folly,—eh? a woman at her time of life to throw herself away upon a fellow of that sort!"

"Very odd," said Stiffkey, in an equally low tone of voice; "but, at that time of life, these turns will happen. Of what profession is the young man?"

"A candle-maker," said Jack, whispering directly in the colonel's ear; having hoisted up one of his little fat hands, trumpet-wise to prevent the affectionate chop-eaters from hearing the avowal, and hoping, even at this straw-catching minute, to devolve the whole of the responsibility of so disgraceful a business upon his respectable mother, leaving it to be inferred that she had been love-led into a connexion much beneath herself.

"Oh!" said Stiffkey.

"Love levels ranks: lords down to cellars bears,
And bids the candle-maker walk up stairs."

"Very true," said Jack, "all right,—and no mistake."

"I say, John," said Mr. Salmon, who fortunately had not heard this little colloquy, "just come here: did you ever see closer fat than this cold mutton? I should like to have twenty or thirty ton of it down, ready for melting. I could sport a dash of hog in him, and no fear of spluttering."

"It's curious to see," said Jack, in an undertone to the colonel, "how, when a man sets himself to trade, he turns everything to shop."

"Very," said Stiffkey.

And so it is; but it was much more curious to observe the total alteration produced in Jack's manner and language by the unexpected visitation of his parent, and her hopeful helpmate. It seemed as if he was altogether unstarched; his hair seemed to uncurl itself, and upon his pale cheek, and contracted brow, evidently lay the whole weight of his mortification and dismay.

"Titsy," said Salmon, "don't you malt?"

"No, my dear J. S." replied the lady. "I'm all for something more in the warm line."

"That's right;" said Salmon. "Rum and water, hot, I consider,—eh?—twig?"

"Exactly so," replied Mrs. Salmon. "I can't think how you two," turning herself round, and addressing the gentlemen at the other table, "can go on drinking that wishy-washy stuff,—paying, too, so much as you do for it. As I said before, I consider it a dead waste of time,—there's no goodness, no nourishment in it:—they call riding in a hack cab, taking danger at eight-pence a mile;—but I call claret-drinking getting the stomach-ache at ten shillings a bottle."

"Little and good is Titsy's motto," said Jem.

"Yes, J. S. dear," said the matron, smiling; "that's the reason I took you."

"Well said, Titsy," said Salmon, "she shan't be a bad un after all."

That Mr. John Brag was not blessed by nature with any super-

abundant proportion of feeling, we have had several opportunities of ascertaining; but it is only fair to say that, during this, in every point of view, humiliating scene to the pretender, his uneasiness—misery it might almost be called—upon his own personal account, was not equal to that which he felt on account of his mother. That she had made herself, at her time of life, a fool, by marrying her shop-man, or shop-boy rather, was bad enough; but such things—or things as extraordinary and silly—happen, *matrimonially*, every day; and besides, he palliated her absurdity in this affair by the reflection that he himself had first advised her to marry somebody, in order to rescue his name from the trammels of trade, and that he had probably accelerated the consummation of her discredit by his facetious pranks upon Waterloo Bridge, when he himself contrived to expose her infirmities for the amusement of his fashionable friends; but, what *did* nevertheless pain even him, was the sight of his parent—of the being who had given him birth—associated with such a creature as Jem Salmon, and by him and his endearing diminutives and nick-names rendered an object of universal ridicule. To hear this wretched animal calling a woman three times his age and four times his size, Titsy, was really and truly tormenting, separated from any prospective feeling of certainty that the degradation of his once respectable relative would form the subject of Stiffkey's most animated description of the humours of Eastbourne, to be hereafter given to his expected visitor and surrounding friends.

"I say, John," said Mrs. Salmon, warming with her refreshment, "John, when you were at home last, you did not think I should get the start of you, however much you advised it. I haven't heard of your marrying a Lady Sally, or a Lady Susan, with forty or fifty thousand pounds tacked to the title;—I've heard of your doings though, in other places."

"Probably," said Jack, "one can't help being talked about."

"I mean with Mrs. ———, what's the name? J. S." said Mrs. Salmon;—"up there, by ———"

"Dallington, d'y'e mean," said Jem.

"Yes, that's it," said the matron; "we heard that story last week—not half a day after it happened."

"What is that?" said Stiffkey, *sotto voce* to Brag.

"I'm sure I don't know what my mother means," said Jack; nor did he, nor could he comprehend how she came to know the name of the lady.

"Don't you, Johnny? I do," said his mother; "so does J. S., don't you? Now, I think I owe you a turn, for playing me off on the bridge, so I'll have a laugh at your expense—all in fun, now it's over."

"My dear mother," said Jack, "pray don't talk about that affair."

"No, not a syllable," said Mrs. Salmon; "only we know all about your making love to the two sisters at once—don't we, James?"

"I believe we do too, Titsy," said Salmon; "two at a time, that's all, John—eh—twig?"

"What, ma'am?" said Stiffkey, who found he had completely succeeded in making Mrs. Salmon consider him "quite the gentleman;" "did our friend try his ambidextrous fortune with both ladies?"

"I don't know," said Mrs. Salmon, "about whose fortune he tried; all I know he got none—between two stools, Johnny—"

"—I know, my dear mother," said Jack, "the proverb is by no means new."

"No," said the lady, "nor the moral of it neither; the way we come to know of it was through the lady's housekeeper; they deal with us for coarse stock, stores and rushlights."

"And ile, Titsy," said Salmon.

"Yes," said the lady; "and so James, you see, went round collecting and so—but you tell the story, J. S., dear."

"Oh, don't trouble yourself, sir," said Jack.

"Pray go on, Mr. Salmon," said Stiffkey.

"Why, I tell you how it was," said Salmon; "I was a just stepping round and collecting, as Titsy says,—for we had an unmerciful heavy bill to pay our broker, and I happens to call at Mrs. Dalington's—so—the family was just gone out o'town—lets see—when was it, Titsy?—one day late in last week—and so I see the housekeeper—Mrs. Cropper—I know'd her in her last place—so I tells her about our little account, and she says, says she, looking at the bill, 'I wonder, now, if your master's any relation to the little man which my missus sent away a night or two ago, with a flea in his ear.'"

"I must beg," said Jack,—“I—shall leave the room if this goes on any farther—I don't want to know the secret history of people of my acquaintance, squeezed out of servants—I don't want to know about any little man."

"No, love, *do* hear," said Mrs. Salmon; "it only shows how things gits round."

"So, I says, says I," continued Salmon, "I can't judge unless you tell me what sort of a little man he is.—'Why,' she says, says she, 'his name's Brag—he's a smartish kind of a chap, with a curly head; and as full of the gab as an egg's full of meat.'—'A sporting chap?' says I.—'Always a hunting,' says she.—So then I just rubs up my hair, and puts up my collar, and gives her a bit of a take-off of you, jist after your manner, 'smack, smooth, right up, straight down, and no mistake.' Whereupon Mrs. Cropper—she's an uncommon good-natured old thing—she claps her two hands toge-

ther and says, says she, 'By gosh that's he—that's the chap as wanted somehow to marry my mistress and her sister too, and got kicked out accordingly,'—twig?"

"Mr. Salmon," said Brag, trembling with rage, or something else, and looking as white as a sheet, "the unfortunate connexion which my mother has formed with you, keeps me quiet—if—it was not for that——"

"Don't agitate yourself," said Stiffkey, with the most perfect *sang froid*. "Mr. Salmon means no harm, I'm sure."

"Harm, not he," said Mrs. Salmon, "he's only lively, and wants a bit of fun."

"Fun! the devil, ma'am!" said Jack: "I shall say nothing; but as for staying in this room a minute longer, I will not; nor, ma'am, will I ever set foot in any place in which that person is to be found. I never was consulted in *your* match—and sure you might run your own race without coming crossing and jostling me on *my* course. Colonel," added Jack, "I am quite sure this business must be as disagreeable to you as it is disgusting to me—perhaps you will follow my example. I shall be glad, ma'am, to say a few words to you in the morning—and I wish *you* a good evening."

"I am extremely sorry, Mr. Brag," said the Colonel, "that you are annoyed. It only seems a little playfulness,—it *must* be all a joke."

"No joke at all, sir," said Mrs. Salmon; "it's all true, only what I say to Jack is, them as throws stones shouldn't live in glass houses."

"Well, I'm sure, Titsy," said Jem. "I'd no notion of this blow up when we came in—I meant to be all pleasant and agreeable."

"Come, Colonel," said Jack.

"Good evening, ma'am," said the Colonel. "I suppose I *must* go, but I assure you I am particularly sorry to leave such agreeable society."

"Where's Jack?" said Mrs. Salmon.

"Gone out, Titsy," said Jem.

"Like one of his own rush-lights, ma'am," said the Colonel, who immediately followed him, putting his finger to his nose, archly, as he quitted the room.

"Bravo, Colonel," said Salmon;—"that's a prime chap, anyhow—eh? Who'd have thought of John's bristling up in that kind of hedge-hog fashion. I'm sure I only wanted to give the Colonel a little touch of *my* way of taking off."

"Yes, my dear J. S.," said the matron, "and the Colonel seems to have returned the compliment. I'm sorry you offended Jack, for I wanted you to be friends."

"Then, Titsy, why did you set me on," said Jem;—"you know'd when once my spirit's up, I can't stop it."

"Why, somehow," said Mrs. Salmon, "the rum and water was strong."

"'T was stiffish—twig?" said Salmon.

"However," continued the Lady, "a fine morning is a good peace-maker, and I dare say we shall all be friends again for the short time we have to stay; besides, to tell you the truth, I never quite believed that Mrs. Cropper's story."

"I'd trust her with my life," said James, "as steady a going cretur, full of fun as she is, as ever trod shoe leather,—takes a tip of two pounds per annum, and is quite satisfied; can't get off with Mr. Evans, the butler, for twice that. No, no, Titsy, as Jack says, leave me alone to deal with the fair sex."

"Oh you divil!" said Mrs. Salmon, "ring the bell, J. S., and let us retire for the night; early as it is, I'm tired, and a little vexed into the bargain."

"Don't worry yourself, Titsy," said James. "I dare say it will be all right to-morrow—ah? smack, smooth, and no mistake,—twig?"

"Now, J. S.," said Mrs. Salmon, "don't go on doing *that*, that's a dear—there's nothing folks is so sore about, as being taken off in that way—don't do it.—Johnny lives in good company, as you see; it is true he has got a particular way of talking, and all that you said about what he had done, and all about the ladies, and Cropper and all, never stirred him no more than you could stir a fire without a poker; till you come to mimic him—that it was set his blood up. I saw his little eyes winking, winking, and his face get as white as a sheet, and I'm sure I never meant to put him in a passion—only—no—it was that—"

"Are you cross, Titsy?" said Jem.

"Not a bit cross," said Mrs. Salmon, "only he's as touchy as touch-wood—so don't go and aggravate him to-morrow."

"I promise and wow, Titsy," said Salmon, "I will *that* do—only you see, being as I consider now, his superior, what the sogers call commanding officer, I think he might have treated me with a little more respect."

"Never mind *that*," said the lady, "ring the bell, and let's bundle. I'm dead tired—the wind blew so fresh—and I can tell you the top of a coach is not as soft to sit on, as the cushion of my arm-chair, I'm all shaken to pieces."

J. S. did as he was bid, and the chambermaid speedily appeared to attend the matronly bride to her chamber, J. S. remaining below as he thought it proper to do, until he was summoned to his roost. This dull interval he occupied by imbibing a refreshing glass of some favourite mixture, and in reflecting upon the unexpected sort of reception he had met with from his son-in-law. However, he had scarcely finished his "tipple," as he called it, when he was

summoned by the attendant sylph, the respected Mrs. Salmon not occupying any very considerable period of time in making her preparations for what she called "tumbling in."—Jem drained his goblet, and ascended the stairs, and "maid-directed," found the door of the room which contained his treasure.

By a preconcerted arrangement the waiter had been engaged to go, or send over, to the library, whither *faute de mieux*, the colonel and Jack had retreated from the unbearable fire of Mr. Salmon's extraordinary liveliness, to let them know when the happy pair were gone to bed, inasmuch as they might return to their temporary domicile, and enjoy a few tranquil moments before they retired to rest. The moment, therefore, that the Salmonian savages had "quitted the ground," a message was conveyed to the dandy and his friend, informing them that the coast was clear; and this message arrived at the library precisely at the moment when Jack had declined playing any longer billiards, because he knew nothing of the game, and because he preferred *écarté*.

The word *écarté* sounded mellifluously to the colonel's ear—he could play the game a little; should they go back to the hotel and try a hand or two—first directing his servant to open the windows and "freshen" the room—order broiled bones at twelve, and not play later than two—positively?

Brag, the moment he heard this proposition from the colonel, was convinced that all was right, and "no mistake;" the absurdities of his poor mother, and the grossnesses of his youthful father-in-law had evidently made no impression. The colonel saw the gentleman in *him*, and the very suggestion of broiled bones, ventilated rooms, and *écarté* till two, settled the affair. It was all arranged, and Stiffkey's man was to teach the willing hostess of the hotel how to concoct a particular sort of punch, which Sir Stumpey Dubs, a wealthy friend of his master, had invented,—of which composition, averse as the colonel was from strong drink, the weakest ingredient was Jamaica rum, the whole compound forming a sort of beverage which reminded you, in the morning, that you had swallowed it the night before, by a sensation very much like that which would have been occasioned by the dislocation of every limb belonging to your body.

Colonel Stiffkey was the most perfect "gentleman"—not to use the term as Brag would use it, but in its purest and most unquestioned shape. He was not brilliant as a wit, but he played his part as well as his associates in the every-day give-and-take conversation of the best society. The immovable quietude and imperturbable civility which he displayed before the bride and bridegroom, were part of his system. Nobody who did not know his heart of hearts could find out whether he was delighted or distressed by that which was passing before him. His mind, with regard to

Brag, had been for some hours made up ; and in all probability the next morning would be the last on which he even would endeavour to recollect his name : but before that morning came, there intervened an evening,—that evening was to be passed, somehow. Mr. Brag preferred *écarté* ; we have seen the preparatory arrangements in consequence of that preference.

Stiffkey and Brag walked back from the library to their sitting-room, whence had been removed, besides the nuisances, which had removed themselves, all the “provender,” upon which they had battered. A card-table had been placed by the colonel’s man, and a small table by the side of it, on which stood two well-sized glasses, out of which they were to imbibe a certain quantity of the West-Indian mumbo-jum, punctiliously prepared according to the recipe of Sir Stumpy.

The room had resumed its former pleasing aspect. Jack found no difference in the manner of his friend, who, in the kindest manner, kept periodically praising England as the only nation perhaps in the world which furnished the brightest ornaments to society from trades and professions—throwing in an agreeable observation now and then, that if such were the facility in other countries, the intellects of the people would prevent their availing themselves of it ; and, in short, that what the French sage had said of our population in comparing it with our porter, that the top was all froth, the bottom all dregs, and the middle the “stout and efficient,” was most true. This encouragement, wonderfully aided by the arrival of Stiffkey’s servant with a closely covered jug of the invaluable compound, raised Jack’s spirits so high, that for the moment he threw overboard all the previous occurrences of the evening, and felt satisfied in his own mind that the fact of his mother’s having married injudiciously, could and would have no possible effect upon his future fashionable career.

“Now then,” said the Colonel, “taste *that* : if you don’t like it I’m mistaken.”

Jack filled a glass and sipped. “Like it !—Gad ! who wouldn’t—eh ?—goes down like milk, and no mistake.”

The resumption of his pet phrases, the renewed twiggle of his hair, and the revived pull up of his collars, proclaimed “*Johannes redivivus*.”

“Well,” said the Colonel, with a tone of perfect indifference, “shall we have a touch at *écarté* ? The broiled bones will come at twelve.”

“All right, and no mistake,” said Jack.

“What shall we play ?” said the Colonel, listlessly shuffling one of the two packs of cards which his servant had put down—“don’t let it be high—five pound points, and ten pound consequences ?”

"Anything you like," said Jack. "I lost twenty pounds to that man at billiards. How he pulled up in his play after the bet!"

"Did he?" said the Colonel—"I didn't observe. Do try some more of that excellent stuff. We will go to-morrow, if you stay here, to an old friend of mine who lives about five miles from this, and I'll show you how *he* drinks it: he'll be delighted to see you."

This put Jack upon the top of a pinnacle. Colonel Stiffkey, after all he had seen and heard, proposed the very next day to take him to visit an old friend at his place five miles off! Poor Jack! Colonel Stiffkey had no such friend; neither if he had, would he have taken Jack with him: furthermore, he knew, *that* which Jack at the moment had himself quite forgotten, that he could not stay out the following day where his mother was: but Stiffkey wanted Jack to play *écarté* at his ease—and so he did, knowing no more of the game than a child of ten years old.

The results of the sitting were—broiled bones at half past twelve, more of Sir Sumpy Dubs's mixture at half-past one, and a retreat at half-past two o'clock in the morning, at which time Mr. John Brag handed over to Colonel Stiffkey two hundred and fifty pounds of the cash he had received from Lord Tom Towzle two days before; and an I. O. U. for three hundred and forty more, which the gallant colonel, in consideration of the ready money already received, very readily accepted in part payment of a balance of five hundred and ninety pounds, which, under the influence of Sir Stumpy Dubs's mixture, the curly-headed adept at *écarté* had lost to his aristocratic associate.

The friends separated and retired to rest, the colonel's servant kindly assisting Mr. Brag to his room,—the colonel, who required no assistance, going to his room by himself.

It was not, however, until both these worthies—either of them curiously instructive in his way,—had betaken themselves to their respective beds—that the innate truth of their characters was made manifest. Jack, broken down by the most extraordinary combination of circumstances,—abused, degraded, and exposed by the man whom his mother had by way of an agreeable surprise, brought down to see and present to him, in the hope of conciliating everything, lay desponding, as deeply as he could in his peculiar state, as to the mischief his unhappy parent might have done him by her appearance there; consoling himself, on the other hand, in his blessed ignorance of human nature, with the belief that the colonel was so entirely his friend; that not only what had occurred had made no change in his sentiments, but that not a syllable of the events of the preceding evening would transpire; and absolutely revelling in the idea that the loss of his five hundred and ninety pounds would not only ensure this much-desired secrecy, but cement a long and lasting friendship between them,

The colonel, who, like a skilful practitioner, had carefully abstained from swallowing the draughts which he had prescribed, laid his cool unthrobbing head upon his pillow, perfectly satisfied with having so well executed his ingenuity in the up-turning of kings, and other curious arrangements of the cards; consoling himself with the justice of outwitting so complete a charlatan as his temporary companion of the tallow tribe; and concluding if he never received one farthing's worth of value for the I. O. U., the worth of which he considered somewhat equivocal, that he had adequately paid himself for the smell of onions and hot rum and water, and the still more oppressive conversation of his friend's intimate connexions immediately after dinner, by the first receipt of the two hundred and fifty pounds cash in Bank notes.

Such were the thoughts and reflections of Mr. John Brag and his aristocratic friend as they dropped off to their slumber on this memorable night. What visions might have occupied the minds of Mrs. Salmon and her dear J. S. it is not our province even to surmise: they are asleep, and lest the reader should fall into a similar state of quiescence, the chapter ends.

CHAPTER XVI.

WHEN Jack rose from his bed—in which, thanks to the numbing of Sir Stumpy Dubs, he had slept soundly—his “head ached consumedly,” as Farquhar says, and not only his head but his limbs; for the potent potion which had been administered to him during the evening by his patrician friend, produced in all the joints of the patient that sense of dislocation, of which the reader has previously been apprised, a recovery from which was generally the work of two or three days.

Jack looked out of the window of his room: the sun shone bright in a cloudless sky, and the sea sparkled and glittered in the breeze. Its surface was dotted with small boats hovering near the shore, on the horizon, larger vessels were gliding up channel, laden with the produce of other climes. Around him the flowers of the hotel's small garden threw their fragrance, and the birds made the air ring with their melody; but Jack gazed and saw not, listened and heard not. The events of the preceding afternoon and night were all that he could think of;—the marriage of his mother—the exposure of himself—the subsequent loss of his money.—He went to the table upon which he had left his pocket-book, counted the remaining notes which it contained, in order to satisfy himself, most unsatisfactorily, that the defeat he had sustained was real, and not

“The baseless fabric of a vision.”

The evidence was too clear to leave a doubt upon his mind; Jack, however, still consoled himself for the loss, by setting it down as a compromise with the colonel for the maintenance of secrecy with regard to the domestic disclosures to which he had been made a party.

Jack indeed had a confused recollection of having enjoined the colonel to the observance of this negative kind of obligation; but none of the circumstances of the past night were very clearly defined in his memory, which had occurred after their return from the library; the general impression upon his mind was, that *écarté* was a very different game from what it had appeared to be to him when he had last played at it; and there did rest a very powerful conviction in what might be called his memory, that the colonel certainly had had prodigious luck in regard to turning up kings, or holding them, which, except at certain points of the game, everybody knows, is much the same thing: never mind, thought Jack, he cannot in justice to himself admit that he continued to associate and play cards with me till two in the morning if the disclosures which he had heard before ten were in any way derogatory to my character; so, said Jack, rubbing up his hair, "it's as broad as it's long,—six one way, and half-a-dozen the other; so there's no mistake."

But then, putting it thus, as regarded the past, to what had Jack to look forward for the future,—the "immediate future," if that expression may be permitted. *There he was still*; domesticated in the house with his detestable father-in-law, whose odious and most unsuitable attentions to his mother seemed likely to fix him as her inseparable companion during their stay. Jack, was most anxious for some "family" conversation, when there were no indifferent auditors of the party. Then came the embarrassment over his mind as to where the people of the house would lay breakfast,—and for how many; whether, in consequence of the unlooked-for association of the previous evening, they would establish a sort of joint-stock tea-and-coffee-company, including the colonel and himself amongst the share holders, and spread out a table for them all, or find a separate room for Mr. and Mrs. Salmon.

Then how was he to act with regard to the rest of the day? His mother had made a great exertion, for *her*, to run down and see him; and although "before company," her disclosures of private matters was in the highest degree disagreeable, he could not leave her; indeed, self-interest contributed to induce his stay where he was, until he had ascertained from herself how she considered him to stand with regard to the business, which Jack began to remember, somewhat, as it should seem too late, was left by his father entirely at *her* command, and under her control, in consideration of his having paid large sums for his favourite son during

his life-time, and having left him extremely well off at his death; and these considerations were floating in his mind, and his brain, which being very much damaged by the last night's revelry, were scarcely competent to their arrangement.

It was while he was pondering these, to him, important matters, that he rang his bell to summon the chambermaid, in order to repeat, as usual, his enquiries after his servant and phaeton, etc. etc. "No Monsieur Tonson lived there."—None of his suite had arrived, and his clothes were again consigned to the rubbing of the lout who officiated in the capacity of "boots."

When this essential officer returned with Jack's "things," he enquired of *him*, as being the first authority, if not in rank, at least in priority of appearance, whether colonel Stiffkey was up, and received an answer that sounded sweeter to his ears than the music of the spheres. The colonel had been up and gone two hours at least—he had ordered horses to his britzka, and had proceeded to Hastings.

"For this relief much thanks," breathed Jack, not in these words, for he perhaps, had never heard them, but in his own pet phrase which I have before noticed, "What an 'appy release." It was, indeed, the removal of a mountain's weight of care and anxiety from his mind; and he was even the more pleased with it, as it seemed to him a sort of attention on the part of his aristocratic friend, that he should leave the only disengaged sitting-room in the hotel for the special occupation of *his* family. Whatever the combination of feelings by which he was actuated might have been, he certainly felt a great deal more at his ease than he was when he rose.

While he was dressing, Jack, who though perfectly qualified to ride a winning horse, and although brisk and lively while things went smoothly, was, when a reverse of fortune came, for a short time, and until a fresh change for the better arrived, "right down, and no mistake,"—was, as he would have said, "regularly floored." It was true the colonel had relieved him from the embarrassment of his society; but it was also true that his mother had formed a connexion which was *not* to be gotten rid of; a connexion which, besides its unsuitableness and the degradation it entailed upon *her*, and necessarily upon *him*, might, and perhaps would, most seriously interfere with his ulterior financial arrangements. If, as it was but too clearly the case, the young shopman had married his old mistress for the sake of what he could get, there could be little or no doubt that he had contrived to secure to himself the power over the premises, stock, and good-will of the business, which his father had exclusively bequeathed to *her* without either bar or limitation.

The question then with Jack during the operation of shaving,

was, whether to ride the high horse, treat Mr. Salmon *de haut en bas*, and talk largely and loudly to his mother, or to do what many greater men than *he*, have done upon similar occasions, make the best of a bad bargain, and conciliate all parties by endeavouring to "put up" his youthful father-in-law, instead of running him down, and so obtain by fair means and honeyed words, that which, he apprehended, he might not so certainly secure by violence or bluster.

It was quite clear from his mother's manner, that she was determined not only to stand up "for her dear J. S." but to justify the course of proceeding she herself had adopted; for long before Jack had retired in disgust, in the evening, the old gentlewoman's conversation had assumed a very equivocal tone and character—it professed to be extremely good-natured, and even playful, but Jack's longfelt neglect, and the events of the bridge lay smouldering in her mind ready to blaze up on the first breeze that might spring up in the family. Jack was alive to all this, and so, after a debate with himself of some half hour, he determined upon doing the amiable, apologizing for the warmth of the anger he had expressed at Salmon's impudent imitation of him, and of adopting a system of conciliation, which, however unsuccessful in the great world of politics, might prove excellent policy in a tallow-chandler's shop.

Jack, having dressed himself, dressed his face in smiles, and, resolved to be gay and think no more of his defeats, or indeed of any of the numerous unpleasant incidents of the last few days, skipped down stairs to the sitting-room, where he found breakfast all prepared.

On the table lay a note, addressed "— Brag, Esq." the writing was unknown to him, but without long poring over it, in order to ascertain the author,—which by opening it at once, he was certain to know—he broke the seal and read.

"DEAR SIR,—I passed so bad a night, and suffered so much from head-ache in the morning, that I resolved upon trying what a drive to Hastings would do for me. I have therefore to offer my apologies for not making one of your party at breakfast. I shall return to the hotel to dinner, and bring with me my friend Gunnersbury, whom, as you know, I expected here, and hope to catch him on the road to Hastings. Yours, faithfully,

"HERBERT STIFFKEY."

"There goes again," said Jack, "civil note enough, and, as I said before, deuced glad he is gone; but the rest of the letter is no go whatever—coming back to dinner, and with that infernal Gunnersbury—all charged and loaded with Dover news; the moment he hears my name, which the colonel in course will mention to him,

out it will all come. We must manage something—cut and run before *that*. If all goes smooth in the domestic line, I shall do—go along easy—straight up, right down, and no mistake.—Waiter, where is the lady—Mrs. Salmon—and Mr. Salmon?”

“The lady is gone to bathe, sir,” said the waiter, “and the gentleman is walking up and down in front of the garden.”

“He is, is he?” said Jack; “look sharp and be ready to send in breakfast when we come back. I’ll go join him—I say, slavey, get plenty of fish—eggs—ham—eh?—coffee—tea—eh? and all the etceteras, and no mistake?”

“You got the note, sir?” said the waiter enquiringly.

“All right,” said Jack; and out he marched to join his horror, J. S. When he got within a few yards of him, he hailed him with a “Good morning!” just to try the temper of his mind, as a captain fires a gun to bring a strange sail to.

“Good morning! sir,” said Salmon coldly, touching his hat.

“Salmon,” said Jack, “give us your hand; don’t be ill-natured, I’m deuced sorry for having flown in that stupid passion last night. I meant nothing, only my blood was up, and no man likes to be mimicked. I spoke sharply; the colonel was there; and—however, I tell you I am deuced sorry, more particularly, you know, considering how we are connected; so let us be friends.”

“Well, John,” said Salmon, in a patropizing tone, “I’m deuced glad to hear this. Titsy and I had a long talk over about last night, and I didn’t think I should have got her even to stop to breakfast this morning; however, now, she’ll be as pleased as I am: I want no quarrelling I’m sure; what is, is always for the best. The business was all going at sixes and sevens, and she all day fretting and fussing—just miserable: and I’m certain we shall do very well. She is a few years older than *me*; but I shall be as old as *she* some day, if I live long enough; so it’s all one in the end.”

The conclusiveness of Mr. Salmon’s reasoning was not quite evident to his son-in-law, whose real hatred of him seemed to increase in proportion to the civility he felt it politic to bestow upon him.

“I’m sure I’m glad to shake hands,” added Salmon, suiting the action to the word, “and have everything go easy;—and now, if you’ll give me leave, I’ll go down towards the bathing machines, where Titsy has been washing herself, and walk up with her; we two by ourselves; in which case I can tell her what has passed between us now, so that she may come up to you all right and ready to be pleased and goodnatured, and so have no squabbling or bother about what’s past.”

“Do, do,” said Jack—“there’s a good fellow!—and I’ll go into the house, and get all things snug and tidy.”

They separated, each to fulfil his intentions—Salmon well pleased with the course Jack seemed to have adopted, and Jack satisfied at having soothed the “animal” into the belief that he was sincere in his amicable professions. How long the game could be played, or whether Jack could play it better than he played *écarté*, remains yet to be seen. It is easy to wear smiles, and look smoothly for a short time; but to continue seeming to love that which one hates, or respect that which we despise, is a most arduous undertaking:—as Tillotson says—“It is hard to act a part long; for where truth is not at the bottom, nature will always be endeavouring to return, and will peep out and betray itself at one time or other.”

By the time Jack had made his arrangements, he beheld the affectionate J. S. and his dear Titsy advancing arm-in-arm from the shore towards the garden-gate of the hotel; and although he had made up his mind to “peace and concord,” there was something so excessively ridiculous in the appearance of his mother so associated with Jem Salmon,—connected too, as they both were in his mind, with the absurdity of the nicknames which they had endearingly conferred upon each other, that he—*he*, the object of ridicule in every society with which he mixed, could scarcely restrain a burst of laughter as he watched their progress homeward, marked as it was by numerous little flirting attentions on the part of J. S. and the playful acceptance of them by Titsy. Jack’s disposition to mirth, however, was checked by regret that if she had chosen to follow his advice and marry, she had not united herself to somebody who might have seemed to the world, to have married her for something besides her money. J. S. he could not consider in any other light than that of a fortune-hunter; and so blind is vanity, or rather, it should be said, so blind is human nature even without vanity, that although his own object for the last four years had been an alliance with a rich wife—he shrank with disgust from a man who had acted precisely upon the same principle, and who only differed from *him* in his pursuit by having succeeded in it. To be sure, Jack had the presumption to look for youth and beauty into the bargain, neither of which certainly had fallen to the lot of Mr. Salmon. However, *chacun à son goût*, J. S. “had eyes, and chose her” as being perhaps, in the words of Butler,

“——— fitter for his turn,
(For fat is wondrous apt to burn;)
Who at his flames would soon take fire,
Relent and melt to his desire,
And like a candle in the socket,
Dissolve her graces int’ his pocket.”

The quotation is somewhat apt, but smelling so dreadfully of the

shop, that even if Jack had ever heard of Hudibras, he would not have thought of using it.

"Johnny, my dear," said Mrs. Salmon, as they entered the house, "now you *are* my son. J. S. has told me all; and we shall live snug and comfortable, and happy. It's never no use raking up old grievances, as I always says,—so give me a kiss, and let us be friends."

Jack did as he was desired, and was bussed accordingly.

"I'm quite refreshed by the washing," said the lady. "The old woman had the deuce and all to do to hold me when the great wave came all over me: I feel it singing in my ears now."

"Rely upon it," said Jack, "it's uncommon healthy."

"I want J. S. to have a dip before we go," said Mrs. Salmon, "but he says he's afraid of the cold. Eh!—where's your friend the colonel?—doesn't he breakfast with us?"

"No," said Jack, "he wrote a note to say he was afraid of intruding upon us, and so has gone over to Hastings."

"Well then, now John," said Mrs. Salmon, "after breakfast you must show us all the sights—that is, if there are any; and we must go to the library, and go down to the shore and see if we can pick up shells,—Kitty, poor girl, was always a bit of a cocklogist—and so make a day of it; for we *must* be off to-morrow morning."

"Yes," thought Jack, "and a little sooner than *that*, I promise you."

At this moment commenced the "*civil*" war in the family, which was not destined to cease and determine much before midnight. Jack had to conceal his unconquerable detestation of Salmon for twelve or fourteen hours, for the sake of securing the influence which it was but too clear he had obtained over his mother, for the purpose of carrying the point now become doubly important, of obtaining a financial supply from home.

Salmon, who was by no means deficient in cunning, was perfectly aware of the hollowness of the treaty of peace into which his son-in-law and senior had volunteered to enter. The violence of Jack's manner, and the strength of the language which he had used the night before, in the presence of the colonel, and his subsequent retirement, accompanied by that gentleman, until he and his bride had gone to rest, were all convincing evidences of the real feeling which the little man entertained towards him. Nor were his suspicions of the character of his present conduct in any degree weakened by the fact that Mrs. Salmon had communicated to him the contents of Jack's letter from Deal, which concluded with a gentle hint as to the want of funds. These things Mr. Salmon put together in his little mind; so that never did Angelo and St. George equip themselves with masque and foil with a more sincere determination of showing their skill

and dexterity, than did these two small creatures after *their* kind.

The odds, however, were two to one against Jack in this game of finesse, inasmuch as while he was fencing with his direct opponent, he had also to keep his mother in perfect good humour: he was to be affectionate, dutiful, and attentive to *her*; gratify all her inclinations of seeing and being seen, show *her* all about the place, and, above all, get *her* away from it, voluntarily, before the return of Stiffkey and his hateful companion. It was in truth, as dear Sandy says, a difficult game, but Jack always felt himself invincible where women were to be won, or men to be managed; nor, strange to say, did the frequently-repeated failures which he experienced in both pursuits either damp his ardour, or render him suspicious of his qualifications for one and the other.

Jack's first object of course now was, to soothe his two guests: then, if he could, to get his mother alone, try her on the subject of his own relative position as regarded the shop; and then on the most immediately interesting topic of all, ready money—then to get Salmon into council, already prepossessed by the kindness and civility he had shown him, and which he proposed to observe towards him during the morning, and so, having kept them within doors until the few visitors at the place should have separated in pursuit of their different amusements, then to take them to see all the things which were to be seen, which, unless friendship and affection provide them, are not numerous, and then subsequently, by some stratagem yet undesigned, get them away altogether before sunset.

"The fish," said Salmon, "is uncommon good here—so fresh coming right out of the sea."

"Oh! all correct," said Jack. "I take care to have a fellow ready to grab them the moment they are caught. Nice place, a'n't it, mother?"

"Why, Jack," said the lady, "I can't say I have seen much of it yet."

"There isn't much more to look at," said Brag, "than you see out of one of these windows; it only reaches just beyond that row of houses; however, we'll go out and have a toddle, as soon as the fashionable time arrives, and no mistake."

"Yes," said Salmon, "one may as well be out of the world, as out of the fashion—eh! Titsy—twig?"

"You are quite right, J. S." said the lady; "and upon my word, now I look at you, I *do* think you seem better for your little trip, already."

"I'm sure of one thing," said Jack, who most certainly did not care if his newly acquired relation was at the bottom of the sea; "a warm bath would do him a world of good."

"So I think," said Mrs. Salmon.

"I shouldn't mind," said Jem, but it seems so strange; I—never *was* in a bath, and—eh?—twig?"

"—That makes no difference," said Jack; "there's no great art in jumping into a tub of hot water. Let me ring the bell, and order one for you in an hour or so?"

"Do J. S., there's a dear," said Mrs. Salmon.

"Well, anything to make myself agreeable," said the half-re-lenting tallow-chandler.

Up jumped Jack, to ring the bell, and in less than five minutes the enquiries whether a bath could be had, were made, the affirmative answer given, and the whole thing arranged to be ready at twelve o'clock.

As for the particular hour at which Salmon was to be pickled, or the peculiar advantages derivable to his health or comfort, from the operation, *they* formed no part of Jack's anxiety or even consideration; anything else that would have kept his father-in-law away from his mother for half an hour or so, would have been seized by our hero with equal avidity: and however ready the said father-in-law might be to oblige "Titsy," he was quite cunning enough to be sure that Jack's civility was the effect of some hidden cause. The difference between the sharpness and indignation of the previous evening, and the solicitude and civility of the morning, was too glaring to deceive even J. S. but as he had his own game to play, and as his temporary absence from his bride would, as he fancied, forward his schemes, he readily acceded to the proposition and seemed quite delighted with Jack's suggestion, that he and his mother should accompany him to the bath and walk about, until he had finished his ablutions.

It was a rare treat to see these two worthies at work, either spinning a web to catch the other; all, however, was smiles and good humour, jest and jollity, and to look at the superficial inches of their countenances a man would not have imagined that anything was going on under the surface but that which was really apparent.

"Well," said Mrs. Salmon, "thank Bogie I have made a capital breakfast,—two whittings—a plate of shrimps—two eggs—three slices of ham—three rounds of toast, and one of bread and marmalade—one cup of coffee, and two of tea—shan't be bad, Jim—this dipping does give one a sharpish appetite."

"Better than dipping in the tallow, Titsy?" said Salmon,—
"twig?"

"True! my dear," said Titsy, "but always recollect—as I used to say to John, if it wasn't for *that*, we should not have a dip *here*. Keep the shop and the shop will keep you. I know Johnny, you don't like talking of it, but I am sure, even now, if you were

to turn to, and be steady, we might still increase our connexion and do capitally."

"And I am sure, my dear mother," said Jack; "I would do anything in *my* power—you have only to point out what; I'm your man—all I want is, to see you and James happy and comfortable."

"Hem!" said Jem, who could not stifle a sort of cough, which sounded awfully artificial.

"In the way of travelling, now," said Mrs. Salmon; "you who go about so much—if you would only just circulate a few of our cards, or even speak to your friends."

"Oh!" said Salmon, "don't worry Mr. Brag, Titsy; he don't like business,—I do. I'm sure whatever we can do to make things agreeable to him, we shall: I dare say we shall have enough, and a little to spare,—eh?—twig?"

"Bravo! Jim," said Brag; "you are a capital fellow, straight up, right down, and no mistake; give us your hand—I see we shall all pull together."

"I hope so, dear John," said Mrs. Salmon, whose happiness at being freed for a few hours from the trammels of business was made complete by witnessing the cordiality which existed between her two companions, of the maintenance of which, the scene of the preceding evening had rendered her extremely suspicious.

"Come, shall we have a walk?" said Salmon; "we may as well be jogging towards this bath, eh?—twig?"

"To be sure," said Jack; "I'm ready for anything you like, all one to me—nice as nip;—come, mother—on with your things—let's be alive!"

"Jump about, Titsy," said Mr. Salmon.

"Oh! you rogue," said his lady, feigning playfully to smack his face, and wheeling out of the door-way (which was rather too small for her pirouette,) in order to get herself ready.

"Fine old girl!" said Jack, "that I must say."

"About the best-natured soul as ever trod shoe-leather," said Salmon; "rely upon it, Mr. John, we shall be very happy with each other. I'm so used to her ways—and she has known me so long—twig?"

"Well," said Jack, "you have *my* good wishes, and no mistake,"

This dialogue, which was extended a little farther with similar protestations of mutual good-will, was at length broken in upon by the return of the lady, with whom the two beaux proceeded to walk to Miss West's baths, one of them on either side of her. The conversation by the way, was of the common-place order. James Salmon expressed as much delight at seeing a plough at work in a field, as Pepys experienced at beholding a flock of sheep on Epsom Downs, to him "the most innocent sight he ever beheld;" all the surrounding objects, whether marine or agricultural, were to Sal-

mon matters of surprise and interest, the sphere of his previous travels never having been extended beyond the range of hills which environ the metropolis, and to which he had been in the habit of looking from a distance, as to the boundaries of the civilized world.

When they reached the baths, Salmon was a little startled, and his wife somewhat shocked, at finding that he was to be consigned to the care of two virgin sisters. Had Mr. Salmon visited that romantic watering-place Aberystwyth some twenty years since, he would have been more startled still; for at that period not only did a fair female prepare the bath for the male visiter, but after he had nearly concluded his ablutions, pop her head into the room, and with the most perfect business-like gravity, and all the purity of Cambrian innocence, ask "would hur like to be rub-bed?"

The moment the doors of the classical building which now contained Jack's father-in-law were closed, Jack began to draw the dialogue between himself and his parent towards the desired point. His mother unconsciously fell into the snare, and after a few remarks upon second marriages, made hypothetically by Brag, she asked him whether she had not greatly surprised him by what she had done.

"Why, yes," said Jack, "I didn't expect it; but I don't think you could have done better."

"Nor I," said Mrs. Salmon. • "As for marrying again, recollect you pressed it upon me; and it was lonesome for me in the house by myself where I had been so long used to a family; all my neighbours too were dropping off, one way or other:—the Jenningses, at the corner, have retired from business, and taken a house near Guildford; Martin, the cutler, is gone to live at Brighton; Old South is dead, and his daughter married: and so what you said about my getting a second husband laid hold on me, and then I certainly did put that advertisement into the paper; and then you answered it,—and—"

"Not I, upon my life!" said Jack; "no,—the trick wasn't mine."

"Well, never mind *now*, who did it," said Mrs. Salmon; "it was done;—and I was exposed, and by *you*, John. I don't believe you meant it. However, I was in a passion, my blood was up, and when I went home I couldn't bear myself, I was so vexed; and Jim, who was at home, was so civil, and so attentive, and all that, that I told him how I had been treated; and I did so for another reason,—to see how he looked,—for I thought, as I told you at the time, that he had found out what I had done, and had told *you*; and so, when I saw he knew nothing of it, I felt easier; and then we talked it over, and so I asked him to sup with me after shutting up, and he did; and then, from what he said, I saw I needn't go husband-hunting any more; and then recollecting how clever he was in the trade, and all that, and thinking, as I wasn't over-young myself, I

had best marry a man who wouldn't grow old in a hurry, why, I made up my mind; and before twelve o'clock that very night the affair was settled."

"Despatch is the soul of business," said Jack, "and no mistake."

"So you see," continued Mrs. Salmon, "there's nobody to blame but yourself,—if blame there is; but I see none. That poor unfortunate creature, Kitty, is gone, and I have nobody to look to but you; and you may rely upon it, Jack, if there should be any little additions to the family, it shan't be no disparagement to my eldest."

Jack thanked his mother most earnestly for her kind consideration.

"I had a long letter from Brown," said Mrs. Salmon, "which I meant to have brought down to show you: he writes very reasonable, and tells me how his agent had run away, and his letters had not been properly delivered, or we should have known of Kitty's death in due course: he don't write in no ways reproachful; doesn't explain all about it quite so clear as I could have wished; and talks of dropping a veil over her indiscretion, which, I suppose, is some Indy fashion; but he does not mention *your* name,—neither good nor bad."

"Don't like me," said Jack, "not one of *his* sort. It wouldn't have been so bad a spec after all, if I had married Nance, as things have turned out; but who could have fancied *that*,—eh? Had the whole story out at Hastings. Never mind—what's done can't be undone, and what was left undone *then*, can't be done *now*; so we must make the best of it, and no mistake. Now, as to the future, how do I stand in the money line?"

"Why, that you must talk to Jemes about," said the old lady, "he has got the key of the till. I have given him up everything, just as your poor dear father left it to *me*; and you'll find him, if you treat him—as I am glad to see you are doing to-day—well and kindly, a very liberal young chap. I was afraid last night——"

"Last night, my dear mother," said Jack, "I did not know half so much of him as I know now; and, besides, before company, I didn't like——"

"No," interrupted Mrs. Salmon, "that's it, Johnny; you are as proud as a pig with two tails; and that's what I blame you for, or rather, perhaps, your poor dear father is most to blame after all, for cocking you up upon stilts in his life-time. Never mind that now; you'll find, as Jemes has told you, that everything will go smooth and comfortable for the future."

"But, mother," said Jack,—"I don't mean to say a word against what you have done,—only don't you think,—I am sure I have the greatest reliance upon Jim,—but don't you think you should have

kept some better hold over the concern and over him, for your own sake?"

"My dear John," said Mrs. Salmon, "in what I have done, I have been all governed by what you have said: you have told me over and over again, that nothing would induce you to take to the business,—I couldn't suffer it to go to ruin; and as for securing any thing for *you*, you told me in the very last letter I ever got from you, except the one from Deal the other day, that you were going to marry a widow with I don't know how many thousands a year;—that very Mrs. Dallington, I suppose, who kicked——"

"——I know, my dear mother," said Jack; "that's all a fib. Never mind, I'll settle that Mrs. Cropper when I go back to town; she shall hop the twig—and no mistake."

"Well, but hear me, John," continued the matron; "whether the lady turned you off, or you turn off the housekeeper, is nothing to the business. You did not marry the widow;—which you told me was a settled thing."

"True, mother," said Jack; "but you wouldn't, surely, have had me take up with—a—mum,—you understand?—not all right,—eh?—screw loose, and no mistake."

"But, Mrs. Cropper——?"

"Never mind Mrs. C.," said Jack; "the housekeeper's room is not the place to get the secrets of such a family as *that*, out of. Leave me alone,—I'll do yet."

"Well, then, that's all as it should be," said his mother.

"What I want is something just at present," said Jack.

"I told Jemes," said Mrs. Salmon, "that something ought to be done for you in *that* way; and I'm sure, by his manner, you won't have anything to complain of. You had better speak to him yourself."

"Perhaps you might open the business," said Jack, "when he joins us. I will leave you for a little: we can meet at luncheon, in the hotel. I must just step to South, to call on a friend: take that opportunity of saying what you think,—you know I like to do it handsome, and no mistake, and—I can arrange all;—repay any advance; although the rents from those Fleet-market houses *do* come in slow;—and then we shall be as easy together as a leg in an old boot,—and no mistake neither."

"I love to hear you talk so reasonably, John," said the old lady. "I thought you would rail, and gibe, and jeer at me, and as I said before, what happened last night didn't go to make me the least easy; however, now I am satisfied, and you shall be satisfied too, John."

Saying which, she pressed his arm maternally, and Jack felt himself winking his off-eye in self-approbation of his admirable skill and manœuvring, which had been evinced not only in carrying, as he felt

certain he had, everything he wished, from the great point of raising the supplies down to the contrivance of getting rid of his two unfashionable-looking companions during the hour or two before the time when, according to his previously-mentioned calculation, the good company would be scattered.

When Mr. Salmon came forth "refreshed," Mrs. Salmon looked at him with an expression of countenance in which strangely mingled the satisfaction of a matron, and the approbation of a bride. As the reader has been already informed, Jim was not a bad-looking cockney,—he had plenty of hair on his head, encouraged in its growth, no doubt, by his professional pursuits: and a profusion of fawn-coloured whiskers, skirting his cheeks and fringing his chin; in which adornment, as Nature has not limited the advantages of curiosity to the aristocracy, the tallow-chandler's shop-boy was quite upon a par with the best tigers of the day, who, as Salmon himself would have said, "move in the upper circles at the West end."

"Well, my dear J. S." said his lady, "was it pleasant?"

"Wasn't it?" said Mr. Salmon. "I never felt nothing more agreeable in all my life, and now I'm all in a glow. I wish we could stop here two or three days longer, Titsy—twig?"

"Well," said Jack to his mother, "then I tell you what,—I'll go and make my call at South, and be back as soon as I can. I will order them to get luncheon at one, and after luncheon, the gay part of the day here, we'll make a tour,—good-b'ye!—and while I am gone, remember.—If you like walking—it's all open—all free—fine air—great deal of water, and sometimes a ship—eh?—it's what I call Liberty Hall, and no mistake."—And away he went to the place of his destination, first touching at the hotel, his ulterior point being another visit to the inns at South, upon his continued fruitless search after his servant, which, better than anything else, suited his purpose of getting away, for a short time, from J. S. and his bride.

When Jack was alone, as we have already seen before, he could not help "thinking," as well as feeling. All that his mother had said came seriously home to him; every untoward incident which had occurred in his own proper sphere, every movement that had been made in that, which was literally his own domestic circle, had originated in his own vanity and vain-gloriousness. His mother had unconsciously set a mirror before him, in which he saw his own absurdities and emptiness; but such reflections were not likely long to affect him: the marriage, the exclusion from the business, his original loss of the exemplary Anne, his perpetual exposures in society, his final rejection by his noble friend, were all the results of the same unconquerable disposition for talking big;—and unconquerable it was,—it was, indeed, his "ruling passion."

The reader will easily conceive what the conversation between

Mr. and Mrs. Salmon turned upon, during their Paradisaical walk about the neighbourhood: she expressed to him her conviction that John was by no means displeased with the marriage; that he was not dissatisfied at any of the arrangements that had been made; that his prospects were good, his connexions excellent; that Mrs. Cropper's story was all a fiction; that there was no relying upon housekeepers,—to which last dictum Mr. Salmon did not, with special reference to Mrs. Cropper, appear entirely to agree,—and that, in fact, he would delight *her*, and nail the affectionate regards of John, by doing all he could to put him in funds.

Judge her delight when, instead of any difficulty or doubt expressed by J. S., she heard him declare his anxiety to do anything and everything *he* could, to accommodate him, and regret that he had gone off on his visit without something agreeable to him having been definitively arranged.

After this discussion, poor Mrs. Salmon felt her heart at rest: her natural affection for her son was strong, his follies were but foibles in *her* eyes; and although, when excited either by imaginary neglect or ridicule, or by anything hot, strong, and sweet, she could not resist the exhibition of her feelings, still she already repented that she had acted so hastily upon the impulse of the moment as to put Jack so entirely in the power of his young father-in-law, and was therefore the more gratified by finding how liberally he was inclined to deal by him.

At luncheon they were to re-assemble, and circumstances had, as we know, conspired to promise that it should be a pleasant repast. The reader shall, therefore, have the re-union in a separate chapter.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE high contracting powers met according to appointment at the semi-demi-dinner, and it was very soon evident to Jack that his mother had, during his absence, exerted her influence over his juvenile father-in-law, and convinced him that he would find Jack most conformable to all his wishes in the family concerns if he would but show a reciprocal feeling of conciliation and friendliness: indeed, before the bottled porter had entirely vanished, and the drop of something warm, which Mrs. Salmon considered necessary after the dipping which she and J. S. had undergone, the one in the hot and the other in the cold water, had quite disappeared, it was no longer a matter of doubt that Jem would do everything in his power to accommodate our hero in any financial arrangements which

he might propose. In order to have all this carried into effect, Mrs. Salmon accidentally—(on purpose)—left the room, giving the gentlemen an opportunity of talking over business.

Mr. Salmon having decided upon his course, and made up his mind as to the system which he intended to pursue, and not being afflicted with that commodity which sometimes most seriously interferes with the progress of worldly concerns, called diffidence, lost no time in doing what he called “coming to the point.”

“I say, John,” said Jem—(and the familiar mode of addressing him was poison to his ears)—“Titsy says you want some stumpy.”

“Why—” said Jack, interrupting him.

“Well now, keep steady,” said J. S; “whatever you want you shall have—twig?”

“Thank you,” said Jack.

“Only now, I tell you what,” said Salmon, “everybody, you know, wants money as well as *you*;—every one, you see, wants a lift. Now Titsy tells me you want fifty or a hundred pounds.”

“Exactly, more or less as the case may be,” said Jack.

“Well now, I tell you,” said Jem, to whose financial reasonings Jack, considering whence he had risen in the concern, of which he might and ought to have been the head, did not listen perhaps with as much urbanity as, under other circumstances, he might have observed,—“suppose you take three hundred.”

“As you please,” said Jack, mollified on the instant, and suddenly impressed with the wonderful liberality of the new head of the House.

“I tell you how we can manage it,” said Salmon: “Titsy tells me your rents will come in at Christmas; now I think we may as well act on the give and take principle—twig?”

“Certainly,” said Jack—“what’s right is right—all fair, and no mistake.”

“Well then,” continued Jem, “*you give me* your acceptance for five hundred pounds at two months; I’ll give you a cheque now for three hundred: you can draw on me for the balance when you want it; and when the bill is due we can settle it all—only it would serve my turn to pay in your bill to my account.”

Jack, who was perfectly convinced that, accept what bill he might, his mother never would permit him to be persecuted on account of it, even if he failed to pay it, jumped at the proposal, although somewhat disgusted by the precautions taken by his juvenile father-in-law, and rather alarmed as to the prosperity of the business which sought to bolster up its character by a payment to his banker, of such a sum in such a shape. Salmon, however, increased his surprise by telling him that the house into which his bill would be paid was not that of their own regular banker, but

one with whom *he* kept a separate account, and who was very liberal in the way of discounts.

Jack saw that if he refused the conditions, he should not get the money, and as he was anxious to have his account look respectable at his banker's, he determined to accede to the proposition; and, as in such matters nothing is like time present; they proceeded to purchase a stamp, in order to conclude the affair out of hand.

Out of this simple piece of business Jack contrived to carry a point, the management of which, had puzzled him all the morning. Upon enquiring at the library, there was not a stamp of sufficient value in the place to carry so large an acceptance;—"they would send that evening to Lewes, if that would do, and get the stamp by the next morning."

A ray of light burst in upon Jack,—a certain means of escaping from Eastbourne, and carrying off his near and dear relations, before the return of the dreaded dandies, instantaneously presented itself;—why not go to Lewes themselves, and let the returning travellers to London depart thence in the morning?—they would see another town; the various coaches from Lewes were better than the Eastbourne one; in short, it would be a trip, and a variety.

Mrs. Salmon, who was in an exceedingly good humour, and especially pleased with Jack, made no objection—Jim seemed for a moment to doubt: however, their project could not be completed without the stamp; for, although Mr. Salmon had the highest confidence in his son-in-law, he did not exhibit the smallest disposition to give the cheque without first getting hold of the acceptance. These doubts, however, were speedily and suddenly terminated by his finding a playbill in the library, announcing that there would be a play and farce acted at the Lewes theatre that evening, by the particular desire of Lady somebody, one of the leading belles of that part of the county, and that it would be a very gay affair. Mr. James Salmon never having been much beyond the limits of the Bills of Mortality, and being of a remarkably theatrical turn, was delighted with the prospect of this amusement, far preferable, as he thought, to the monotonous roll and splash of the waves on the beach: therefore he decreed that thither they should go, there get their stamp, transact their business, have their dinner, see the play, get a bit of supper after it, and so be up and ready for a start to town in the morning.

"Capital notion!" said Jack—"nothing better: don't you think so, mother?"

"Indeed I do, John," said the old lady; "and I have had so little of your company of late, that it's quite a treat to go with you anywhere."

"Let us lose no time then," said Brag—"we'll have a barouche—or sociable, if they have such a thing—that will hold us

comfortably, and we'll have a regular afternoon and evening of it. I'll settle the bill; you are *my* visitors, and—

"No, John, no," said his mother: "we didn't come down to see you for what we could get—so don't talk of that."

"Well, just as you please," said Brag. "What time shall I say?—half an hour—eh?—ought to get early to Lewes, and dine in time for the play. I'll say half an hour, and off we go, right up, straight down, and no mistake."

Saying which, Jack, glorying in the success of his scheme, and the fortunate turn of circumstances, which at once relieved him of all doubt and difficulty with regard to the conduct of the evening, proceeded to the hotel, ordered the carriage to be ready in time, directed the landlady to charge the horses to Salmon, and left a message to be delivered to Colonel Stiffkey, that he should return to the hotel to sleep; having previously packed up his valise, containing his cap, comb, etc. and ordered it to be put in the carriage; giving directions that, if his servant and phaeton *should* arrive, they were to wait for him till his return; because if he should not be able to get back in time that evening, he should certainly be back to luncheon the next day. Thus his liberal offer of considering the Salmons as his guests was metamorphosed into *their* paying not only for their living, but for the horses which, for his own convenience, he had engaged for them; moreover embracing the dexterous contrivance of leaving Colonel Stiffkey to pay for the dinner of the day before, or, if not that, of leaving the landlady to put up with the loss of one half of the expenditure.

Punctual to the moment, the carriage with *four* horses, rendered necessary by the length of the stage, drove up to the door: the hurry and bustle of the moment, the sight of the equipage, the courtesy of the servants, and the general excitement, threw Mr. Salmon off his guard, and he did not give himself time—indeed, Brag would not allow him any—to discuss the different items of the bill; but having, under his son-in-law's advice, left a sum sufficient to satisfy the attendants for both parties, he stepped into the open barouche, in which the seat of honour was reserved for him by the side of Tissy, Jack going with his back to the horses, looking as obsequious as an equerry. His excessive humility and politeness upon this occasion had two causes; in the first place, he felt that his mother and her boy-husband would be pleased with his civility; and, in the next, he thought that this show of deference to them in the open carriage would convince any of the promenaders, whom they might encounter—always excepting those who might have witnessed their descent from the London coach the preceding evening—that his travelling companions were people of consideration.

Arrived at Lewes, after a stage remarkable for the exorbitant

tolls which are levied on the road, the party reached the "Star" in perfect safety and excellent time. Their appearance was the signal for a ringing of bells, and an outrush of waiters, to an extent perfectly astounding to Jem, who had no idea of the difference in the effect producible by four horses when drawing what looked like a private carriage, and that created by them when dragging a stage-coach. All enquiries as to accommodation being satisfactorily answered, dinner was ordered, and John and his father-in-law proceeded to make their purchase of the stamp at the library; whence they repaired to the theatre, where Jack, by dint of certain flourishes, secured one of the stage-boxes, which, luckily for the gratification of his ambitious heart, had been given up only a few minutes before by a very distinguished country lady who was unable to occupy it, because her ninth child had been suddenly attacked with scarletina.

In turning away from the door of the play-house, Jack was struck by the well-turned figure of an exceedingly smartly-dressed woman, whom by her gait and manner, taken in connexion with the locality, he was induced on the instant to set down in his own mind as one of the actresses. Jack was right; it was one of those fair and fascinating creatures, who, as Gay says of women in general,

• " ———seduce all mankind ;" •

but his surprise was inconceivably great when he saw her, the moment she recognised his companion, hasten up and hold out her hand towards him with all the warmth and cordiality of "old friendship."

"Why, Mr. Salmon," said Miss Roseville, "what brings you here?"

"Chance, and a little business together," said Salmon; "twig?"

"I hope you mean to come to the play to-night," said Miss Roseville, with one of those looks which it is beyond the power of pen to describe.

"We have just taken a box," said Salmon.

"Where are you staying?" said Miss Roseville.

"At the Star," was the reply.

"Do you stay long?"

"No," said Salmon, "go to-morrow."

"Oh you naughty thing!" said the lady. "Well, good b'ye, if I don't see you till the evening; —I lodge at the milliner's, just opposite,—good b'ye."

Her departure was a considerable relief to J. S., who was kept in a state of perpetual twitter during the brief parley between them. He would willingly have given five pounds not to have encountered the fair syren while in the society of Brag; and

would now have readily given twice as much to ensure his silence upon the subject when they got home.

"Why," said Brag, "you seem quite free and easy with that young creechur—who is she?"

"That," said Jim, "is Molly Hogg. I've known her these three years;—she is engaged at one of the Minors, and calls herself, in the bills, Roseville,—it sounds better than Hogg;—very good-natured girl."

"She seems so," said Brag, "and no mistake."

"I'm sure I didn't think of finding *her* here," said Salmon: "I haven't seen her now for a good while."

"Uncommon pretty," said Brag. "I suppose I have seen her before—don't recollect,—see so many—eh?"

"Well," said Salmon, evidently nervous, "shall we go and do this bill? I'll give you the cheque; or, if you like, I'll draw it in town to-morrow, and cross it to your banker's—save another stamp—twig?—And, John—there's no harm in what I'm going to say—only you *can* do me a favour,"

"What is it?" said Brag, "name it, and it's done,—straight up, right down, and no mistake."

"Why," said Salmon, looking uncommonly sheepish; "there's nothing in it—but—I—wish you wouldn't say anything to Titsy about my meeting little Hogg."

"Not I," said John; "I know the female sex too well not to know how easy they are made jealous. I conclude there's nothing serious?"

"—Nothing, upon my life!" said Salmon: "besides, I give you my word, I haven't seen the girl these six months—twig?"

"Mum's the word," said Brag; "no—no—there's no use making quarrels in families—life's too short for that, eh?"—

"Why, Mr. Brag," said somebody in a stentorian voice, "I thought we had stolen a march upon you, and left you at East-bourne."

Brag turned suddenly round on hearing himself accosted, and beheld his sporting friend Peckover.

"Oh, sir," said Jack, "here you are!"

"Yes," said the gentle giant; "Mrs. Peckover was invited to join Lady Patcham's party at the play; it is what the actors call *her* bespeak, so she has come here, and dines with Lady Patcham early, in order to be in time."

"We are going to the play too," said Jack.

"Mrs. Peckover seems to think," said Mr. P., "that the house will be very full; and she tells me that the play is a good play, and that some of the players are good players; for *my* part I don't trouble my head much about such things—Ha, ha, ha!—Do you stay here, or return to-night?"

"Stay," said Jack.

"You are like Mrs. Peckover," answered the other; "she doesn't mean to go back till the morning,—for, as she says, a drive in the dark, of nineteen miles, after the heat of a play-house, is no treat—Ha, ha, ha!"

"Are you at an inn?" said Brag.

"Yes," said his friend, "Mrs. Peckover patronizes 'The Star'; she says it is the best house. She has secured rooms there,—at least, so she has sent me word from Lady Patcham's. I leave all these things to her."

"Well, sir," said Brag, "I suppose we shall meet in the evening. Stiffkey went off to Hastings this morning; he will be back at Eastbourne in the evening."

"Capital fellow, the Colonel," said Mr. P. "Mrs. Peckover says she thinks him one of the most agreeable men she ever met, —and she's a tolerably good judge of these matters.—Ha, ha! Do you go back to stay at the hotel?"

"Probably not," said Brag. "I have got a very pressing invitation to the Isle of Wight—can't be everywhere."

"No," said P. "I only asked, because Mrs. Peckover means to invite the Colonel to dine with us one day this week, and she was enquiring this morning how long you proposed to stay."

"I'm afraid I must start," said Brag, "however, if I should go back, in course I shall have the pleasure of seeing you."

"Good morning!" said Peckover; "I must go and find Mrs. Peckover; she told me she should be down in the town shopping with Lady Patcham, I must not lose sight of her. Good morning!"

"Good morning!" said Jack, and away he and his friend proceeded to their temporary residence, where they were received by Mrs. Salmon in a tempestuous humour, the sweetness of her temper having been curdled, and her spirit stirred by circumstances which were but too soon developed.

"Well, I'm sure, gentlemen," said the matron as they entered the room, "you haven't hurried yourselves."

"We have been shopping, Titsy," said Salmon.

"Don't Titsy me; sir!" replied the lady, her cheeks burning, and her eyes almost starting out of her head. "I have been shopping too: you did not suppose I was going to be stewed up in this place, while you and Mr. John were sitting all about the town. I have got eyes, Mr. Salmon, and I'll take care and make pretty good use of them—I can tell you that. Pray, sir, who was that fine flaunting miss in the lavender-coloured gown, with the short petticoats, and platted tails hanging over her shoulders?"

"Gown!" said Lem.

"Tails!" said Jack.

"Yes!" said the lady, reddening with rage, "gowns, and tails: you are a nice pair; you'd do uncommon well to run in a curricule, I'm thinking. I ask you who that dressed-up minx was, that you were talking to in the street?"

"A friend of mine, my dear mother," said Brag, resolved to bind Jem eternally to him by an act of self-devotion, which, in the first instance, might induce him to make the cheque five hundred instead of three—"knew her in London—one of the actresses:—met her at Lord Tom's—used always to take a box at her benefit:—very amiable girl—supports an aged mother and nine orphan brothers and sisters."

"A friend of yours, Master Johnny, is she!" said Mrs. Salmon; "why, then, I wonder she didn't shake you by the hand instead of Mr. Jim:—that won't do—no, no! *This* was the trick of coming over here to the play, instead of enjoying the agreeable company of that genteel colonel, and showing him how we had made up matters, and how comfortable we could live together. Oh! to be sure! Mr. Salmon saw in the playbill who was to act here, and off he comes, helter-skelter, no matter what's to pay, in order to see her painted face."

"I assure you, Titsy," said Salmon, "I did not know a word about it: and as for going to the play, if you don't like it, we won't go; and if you like to go back to Eastbourne, we will go back directly."

"I'm sure that's fair enough," said Brag; "so don't let's squabble about nothing. Men of the world know great lots of people for whom they don't care a brass farthing. Here, dinner's just ready—the stage-box-secured—all right, and no mistake."

"Well," said the lady, "I don't want to break up our little family party, and I should like well enough to go to the play; but I will not go if that young woman performs to-night. What's her name, John?"

"Hogg," said Jack:—"didn't you say Hogg, Salmon?"

"I!" said Jem—"no, *you* said her name was Hogg."

"So I did, to be sure," said Jack.

"Have you got the playbill, sir?" said the lady to her husband.

"Yes, there it is," said Salmon. "And now while Titsy is looking that ever, we may as well do this job about the cheque."

"All right," said Jack; "come along—here's pen and ink. You draw on me; I accept—payable at my banker's."

At this moment, and just as Mrs. Salmon had satisfied herself that no person blest with the euphonic name of Hogg was to contribute to the entertainment of that night's audience, a tall, fresh-coloured chambermaid opened the door, having previously tapped at it, and entered the room.

"I beheve, ma'am," said she addressing Mrs. Salmon, "my mistress misunderstood you: she said there were only two

beds wanting to-night:—do both the gentlemen stay here?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Salmon—"both."

"Then the young gentlemen will want two," said the maid, "and——"

"No, no," said Mrs. Salmon, "we want but two."

"Then, where will your son sleep, ma'am?" asked the maid.

"My son," said Mrs. Salmon—"why in his own bed to be sure—where else should he sleep?"

"Then where will Mr. Brag sleep, ma'am?" said the maid, who had arrived at the knowledge of his name, in consequence of his accustomed enquiries after his "servant and carriage," which he had told the landlord he firmly believed to have been at Lewes.

"Why, Mr. Brag is my son," said the lady.

"Oh! beg pardon, ma'am," said the chambermaid—"I thought the other young gentleman was *your* son, being the same name."

"Thought!" said Mrs. Salmon—"then you had better not have taken the trouble of thinking anything about it. Mr. Salmon is my husband:—will *that* satisfy you?"

"Oh! quite, ma'am," said the maid, looking exceedingly surprised, and particularly foolish—"I beg pardon,—I——"

And so she retired, having by no means contributed to the settlement of Mrs. Salmon's agitated mind, who, the moment the door was shut, fired up, anew, and exclaimed in a tone of exasperation—

"No wonder, Mr. Jemes, the woman should be mistaken. I have no doubt she saw your goings on in the street, and so made up her mind that you couldn't be a married man."

"Never mind her mistake, mother," said Jack, who was determined to keep all things smooth; "you can't expect much wisdom in a chambermaid—so—now here's dinner, let us overcome all our little worries, and you two shake hands and be friends, and no mistake."

"Come, Titsy," said Salmon, holding out his hand.

"Oh!" said the lady snatching away hers, "I've no patience with you."

When they sat down to their meal, common prudence dictated the observance of tranquillity and civility before the waiters, and the dinner happening to be good, and the wine extremely palatable, the matron softened from her stern resolve, and before it was time to go to the play, peace was restored, and a calumet-like glass to the healths of their noble selves concluded the sitting, whence, it must be owned, Mrs. Salmon rose with some reluctance, and not a little difficulty. The change of air, the increased exercise, the bottled porter at luncheon, the irritation before dinner, and the strong-bodied port wine after it, had combined to cloud the clearness of her mental faculties, and, to a certain extent, deteriorate from her bodily activity.

Supported, however, by her living, loving props, the matron succeeded in reaching the theatre. When they arrived, the play had just begun, and the bangings and flappings of the door and the seats drew all eyes to the stage-box, in the front row of which, and nearly occupying it all, Mrs. Salmon placed herself, J. S. taking his seat beside her—

“Still fond, and amorous, and billing,
Like Philip and Mary on a shilling :”—

Jack occupying the place immediately behind his mother. To be sure, however desirable the stage-box might have appeared to be, the circumstances which had occurred during the day, rendered it, if a post of honour, at least a post of danger, particularly as far as Jem was concerned. In the first place, the glare of the whole row of flaring lights in front of the stage rested directly upon Mrs. Salmon's eyes; in the second place, the illumination proceeding from the said lights exhibited her personal attractions, and all the peculiarity of her costume, with a most awful precision to the audience; and in the third place, their proximity to the actors, and the view which the box commanded of “behind the scenes,” not only destroyed her comfort as destroyed the illusion, but afforded the most unfortunately favourable opportunity for Miss Roseville, *née* Hogg, to telegraph J. S. at every available opportunity.

In the opposite box and the box adjoining it, were ranged Lady Patcham's party, including the Peckovers, Mr. Peckover having been placed in the corner next the stage of the third row of the stage-box, in which snuggery it is probable Mrs. Peckover thought he would be more at his ease than anywhere else.

The play was *Othello*. The Moor, by what is called a London star,—King Log amongst the frogs;—and as ill-luck would have it, Miss Roseville, who in London had been doomed to the humbler walks of the illegitimate drama, was the *Desdemona*. She was, naturally, elated at her promotion, and determined to act in right earnest. To Mrs. Salmon “*Shakspeare*” was yet a sealed book,—she seldom went to theatres in London, and even if she did, the size of the houses, combined with the distance at which she sat from the stage, would have rendered any one of his finest plays a mere blank to her mind. But it so happened that she had never seen *Othello*, and, although it is quite impossible to spare sufficient space in these pages to record all her running commentary on the text as it proceeded, we may be able to save a little of it, which certainly did contain some new ideas and illustrations, even after Johnson, Warburton, Steevens, Malone, and Co., had done their best, or worst.

In the senate scene she began to criticise the probability of the story.—“Run away with an old man's daughter!—what, a nigger!

—Stuff—nonsense, Jim—not true.—What does he mean by his head and front?—I don't see any curls.—Antropopygeis—where do they live?—with their heads under their shoulders.—Well I'm sure—heard her story by parcels—that was to save postage, I suppose."

This accompaniment was droned out in a tone of voice sufficiently loud to induce the audience to cry, "Hush! hush! silence!" and to compel Jack just respectfully to hint that his mother's remarks were unlike the speeches of certain modest members in another place, quite audible in the gallery:—but—just as the "nigger," as Mrs. Salmon called the "Moor," had got to the words

———"she wished
That Heaven had made *her* such a man."

Desdemona,—Miss Roseville,—Molly Hogg herself, appeared at the wing, ready to come on:—the moment she arrived there, and before her train was consigned to the dirt of the stage, her eye caught that of Salmon;—a look of recognition followed,—the excited matron saw it;—she, what she called, "contained herself" at the minute,—but, coupling what she had seen in the afternoon with what she then witnessed, she was not long in making up her mind, that although she had unplatted her tails and lengthened her petticoats, the girl in the lavender gown in the street, was the nigger's wife in the play.

Miss Roseville was extremely well received, and played very respectably, and things went on very quietly; but, after Mrs. Salmon had somewhat loudly denounced Brabantio as an old fool for making it up, and the scene had proceeded to where Othello takes Desdemona away, Miss Roseville, having nothing better to do; cast a lightning look at Jem Salmon, standing within two yards of him, and when she made her exit, the old lady could no longer resist the influence of her rage.

"Did you see *that*, Mr. James," said she.

"What, Fitsy?—what?" asked Salmon.

"That girl's look at *you*," replied the enraged wife; "I'm sure it's the same I saw you talking to before dinner:—if she does it again I'll speak to her—I will—"

"My dear mother," said Jack, interposing in a whisper. The attempt, however, was futile; the demon had been awakened, and was not so easily to be appeased. It is true, that while the dreadful Desdemona was out of sight, it seemed to slumber; although when Cassio, by Iago's desire, gives Emilia a chaste salute, Mrs. Salmon's delicacy was so greatly alarmed, that she exclaimed, "Well, I'm sure, what next?" which created a slight laugh in the vicinity of the stage, and even on the stage itself; and when Othello performed a similar act of kindness to Desdemona, a somewhat

similar observation escaped her. Still, as the heroine happened to be placed during that short scene with her back towards the box, nothing occurred to rouse the lion, until, as she turned to go off, the irresistible desire of Miss Roseville, *née* Hogg, to ascertain who Mrs. Salmon was, and in what manner she could be related to or connected with her smart friend Jim, induced her to throw another transient glance into the corner where they sat;—a movement which was instantly followed by Mrs. Salmon's giving her husband a pinch, of anything but an amatory character, on his knee; accompanied with a terrific "Ugh," at the bottom of her voice.

Her agitation now became visible, and the next thing she did, was to take so horrible a dislike to Iago, for being vulgar enough to mention King Stephen's inexpressibles by their coarsest and commonest name, that her companions began to think she was sufficiently disgusted with what was going on, to wish to retire;—but no—as soon as the scene between Othello and Iago commenced, her attention was fatally recalled. She fancied and felt that it was all real, and got so interested in the progress of the discovery of Desdemona's guilt, of which she was herself perfectly satisfied, that she kept encouraging him by continuous exclamations of "That's right,"—"Tell him all,"—"Nasty hussey!"—and when he came to the words

"Beware, my lord, of jealousy,

It is a green-eyed monster,"—

she could not help saying to J. S. in a tone by no means confidential—"Better *that* than a black-eyed one at any rate."

Things after this proceeded rather calmly, until the Moor, in the height of his rage and abhorrence, exclaimed in a most impassioned manner—

"I'd rather be a toad"—

Mrs. Salmon, who did not wait for the alternative, cried out loud enough to be heard half over the house—"Well, that's a rum taste, anyhow!"

This observation again attracted the attention of the gentle Desdy, who was again at the side scene waiting for her cue to come on with the hankerchief, and again her regards were thrown upon Salmon.

"There, Jim," said the lady—"there she is again." And when she appeared solacing her husband on account of his headache, all her anxieties were met by her respectable rival and auditor, with the words "Gammon!"—"Pooh!"—"I don't believe you;" until, on quitting the stage, and repeating the words,

"I am very sorry to see that you are not well!"

Miss Hogg certainly *did* look somewhat pointedly at Mrs. Salmon herself.

"I'll tear her eyes out, Jemes," said the bride.

"Shall I go away, Titsy?" said Salmon.

"Go away, indeed!" replied the lady—"no no!—you don't budge an inch.—Did you ever," continued she, turning to her son, "ever see such impudence as that? I'll watch her pretty closely, and if it's what I think—if I don't—Never mind; them as lives longest sees the most."

This sounded ominous, but Jack and Salmon hoped that nothing more would come of it. However, when Desdemona next appeared, and ventured so near the box that the direction of her eyes could no longer be doubted, although the expression of her countenance was more indicative of anger and curiosity than of love, Mrs. Salmon exclaimed—

"Jim, I'll spit in her face!"

"Titsy! Titsy!" said Salmon.

"Oh, Titsy! my eye!" cried she—"can't I see?"

"Hush! hush! hush!" cried the audience in the boxes, : "Silence!" said the pit: "Turn her out!" roared the gallery.

This noise, the more particularly, attracted the looks of Miss Roseville to the offending party, and consequently provoked some horrid grimaces on the part of the jealous wife, which, when the poor girl put on something like a supplicating look, was consummated by Mrs. Salmon's performing that, which my friend Mr. Gurney saw the convicted pot-stealer at the Old Bailey exhibit to the astonished judge, in the shape of what is conventionally called a "double sight." Still the tumult was suppressed—every glass in Lady Patcham's box being directed point-blank into Brag's box—until that part of the scene in which Desdemona, (still availing herself of every opportunity of casting looks rather of enquiry than tenderness towards Salmon,) is spoken to, by Othello, in the most cutting terms. At the end of every one of his severe speeches, Mrs. Salmon kept crying out in a sort of spasmodic whisper, "That's it!"—"Give it her, nigger!"—"Sarve her right!"—till at last the Moor becoming so violent, that even the mightiness of Shakspeare himself, does not justify a repetition here of the word he uses, calls her an impudent—something; when Mrs. Salmon, starting from her seat, exclaimed at the top of her voice—"You are right, old fellow!—she is one, and I know it!"

Here the uproar became general—the cry of "Turn her out!" instead of being confined to the Gallery,—was universal. The black star came forward and bowed; Desdemona herself stepped to the front of the stage, and performed a certain number of regulation heavings and pantings, amidst loud cries of "Down, down!—Silence, silence!"—Salmon holding his bride back in an immense fright, and Jack actually ready to die of the disaster.

After a few minutes silence was obtained, when Miss Roseville,

trembling like a leaf, said, or rather faltered out :—"La-dies and gen-tle-men,—"
(here a flood of tears P. S. produced three rounds of applause)—"I am placed in a situation of painful difficulty. Conscious of earnestly exerting the small ability I possess, for your entertainment, I find myself so loudly and constantly interrupted by a lady in the stage-box, of whom I have no knowledge, that I have only to throw myself upon the accustomed liberality of a British public for protection." (Loud cheers.) "If I have offended"—("No, no, no!")—"Ladies and gentlemen, from my heart I thank you!" This said, with a profound inclination of the head, hands crossed over the bosom, and a curtsy down to the ground, which produced upon Miss Molly Hogg's drapery the effect of what is called, in gamesome times, "making a cheese," produced reiterated shouts, accompanied with cries—"Turn them out!—turn them out!"

Now had Mrs. Salmon's wrath reached its highest pitch : "I won't go out!" she exclaimed. "It's all very fine your talking ; but I tell you what, Miss Hogg—I won't let you stand making sheep's-eyes at my J. S.—I won't ; and if you come near him, I'll tear them out of your head, and leave you to see through the holes."

Here the riot and confusion were such as to convince Brag that nothing but the retirement of his respectable parent could save her from expulsion ; he therefore put on a supplicating air, and begged her to come out with *him*—a petition in which Mr. Salmon earnestly joined, and for which his exemplary bride, having no other means of venting her rage, gave him a most tremendous slap in the face, which sent him sprawling over the second seat, accompanied with a loud remark, that he was as bad as Molly Hogg. Jack, assisted by a box-keeper and the manager, succeeded in getting the infuriated dame into the lobby, whence seeing a door at its termination evidently leading on to the stage, she dashed through it, and if, by the merest chance in the world, her companions had not kept fast hold of her, she would assuredly have rushed on to the scene, and utterly annihilated the gentle heroine of the night, in the sight of all the audience.

To Brag, the events of the evening were destructive, as far as Eastbourne, or that part of Sussex went : they would form an era in the theatrical annals of Lewes ; and the delight which Mrs. Peckover exhibited during the whole proceeding, was but too certain a confirmation of Jack's previous suspicion, that she had directed Peckover to find out when he meant to leave the neighbourhood, in order that she might regulate her invitation to Colonel Stiffkey, so that it might not be sent to him until his little sporting friend was gone.

Here was another of the numerous disastrous results of Jack's unconquerable propensity for rhodomontade and quackery. If he had not made himself ridiculous at Dover, he need not have feared

encountering Gunnersbury at Eastbourne; he then would not have felt so anxious to get to Lewes, where, as his ill stars decided, a detachment of Eastbourne fashionables had (as if purposely) arrived, in order to be the historians of his exposure to the colonel and his friend upon their return.

When the discomfited trio reached the inn, much to the surprise of the host and hostess, the condition of Mrs. Salmon was beyond description pitiable. Brag and Salmon were quite aware that the matter would not rest where it was: that Miss Roseville, *à la* Hogg, knowing from his own lips where he lived at Lewes, would most unquestionably despatch a note, or perhaps come herself, to that *locale*, to enquire what the real cause of the elderly gentlewoman's extraordinary and outrageous conduct could really be; and Salmon's looks, occasionally interchanged with Brag, spoke too plainly his apprehensions on that score to be misinterpreted:

That Mrs. Salmon would permit her J. S. to leave the house that evening, or indeed trust him out of her sight till after their return to London, was not to be imagined; and therefore Jack, with a good-humour not uncommensal with his vanity and folly, determined to save the *éclat* of such a visitation by returning to the theatre himself, seeking out the young lady, and explaining, in Salmon's name, the real history of the case. His difficulty was, how to "put Salmon up" as he called it, "to what he contemplated;" however, he thought if he mentioned his return to the playhouse with an emphasis upon the words "he wanted to see somebody particularly" his father-in-law would understand what he was going to do, and there would be no mistake,—Jack certainly being rather stimulated to his friendly exertions in the affair by his opinion of Miss Hogg's personal attractions, and being moreover anxious, for the sake of his mother's peace of mind, to ascertain to what extent the intimacy of James and the romantic Molly had actually been carried.

Of course Mrs. Salmon did not interfere to prevent her son's return, which he told her he felt necessary; but although he really did contrive to make Mr. Salmon understand that it was for his good he was going, the unfortunate husband apprehended so much from being left *tête-à-tête* with his bride, after the indiscreet use of what she called "Miss Hogg's black rollers," that he would have preferred the chance of a battle-royal, in which they would all be engaged together to the discipline which he was quite confident he had to undergo when left alone in the society of his lady.

What passed in Jack's absence we do not seek to enquire; suffice it to say, that, after various applications to the servants for water and hartshorn, and sundry other restoratives, Mr. and Mrs. Salmon departed to bed—whether to rest or not, it is not for us to determine. A message was left with the waiter for Mr. Brag, that they had secured places by the morning-coach for London, and

should breakfast before they started. In fact, everything had been so decently conducted after John's departure, that the waiters and others concerned in the administration of affairs at "The Star," and who had up to that time received no intelligence of the "row" at the playhouse, were perfectly unconscious that there had been such a storm, or that the ill-matched pair resident in their house had played so prominent a part in the performances of the evening.

When Jack reached the theatre, he procured an audience of Miss Roseville, whom he found protected by her mamma, and dressed *à la paysanne*, ready to sing the popular ballad,—

"I'm a poor country maid, that's for sartin,"

for the performance of which she was particularly celebrated. He explained to her in his smartest manner the history of the affair, and that he had called on the part of his friend, to explain away the extraordinary conduct of the lady who was his wife.

"What!" said Miss Roseville, *née* Hogg, "is Salmon married to that old cataraman? I shouldn't be surprise, ma', if she was the old tallow-chandler's widow, with the fool of a son, that he used to talk to us about."

"Very likely, my dear," said Mrs. Hogg: "Keep your shawl round your throat, dear. We are very much obliged to this gentleman for explaining that it was not Mr. Salmon's fault."

"Very much indeed," said the young lady. "Of course the public press will give a proper explanation of the affair; it is a case that must be deeply interesting to every lover of the drama, and indeed to everybody in the empire,—for it is a most extraordinary affair. Ma' and I know several of the gentlemen who are engaged 'on' the London papers; and we mean to draw up a statement which will no doubt be satisfactory, and remove any unfavourable impressions which an incorrect report of the transaction may in the first instance, make."

"But I think, dear," said Mrs. Hogg, "you should send a civil message to Mr. Salmon, and say you are sure he had no share in the disturbances, because, dear, he has always been a very kind friend to you."

"Pray, say that to him, sir," said the young lady; "and if you have an opportunity of speaking to him alone, ask him from me, if his present amiable lady is really the Widow Waddle?—he'll know whom I mean."

"My dear love, what a girl you are!" said mamma.

"But," said Jack, "perhaps that may be dangerous; it may be Widow Waddle, and then——"

"It won't make the least difference," said the playful young creature. "What she *has*, not what she *is*,—he used to say; and as it was only her money he married her for, now he has got that,

and put capering Jack's nose out of joint, you may say what you please of the widow."

"And whom," said Brag, "did my friend Jim call capering Jack?"

"Why that, sir," said Mrs. Hogg, "was what he used to call the old woman's son, who has turned fine gentleman, and we used to have great fun about him : Salmon used to give us imitations of him whenever he came to sup with us."

That they had not been good imitations seemed tolerably evident, inasmuch as the original had not been recognised. However, Jack went on making the amiable, somewhat agitated, and rather hurried by the novelty of his position and the bustle going on behind the scenes, and, above all, by the concluding and conclusive evidence as to the character of his father-in-law's affection for his mother, his marriage with whom appeared, from what he had just heard and seen, extremely like a stepping-stone to the future attainment of the hand of Miss Roseville, *née* Hogg.

"I'll give Mr. Salmon your message, depend upon it," said Jack. "Do you stay long here, Miss?"

"No," said the mamma, "we go up to town to-morrow, by the coach, and so to Northampton, where Mary has got a three nights' engagement. When we return, her regular theatre opens,—and we shall settle down in London."

"I assure you," said Miss Roseville, "I shall not be sorry;—this starrng is very tiresome work."

"By the coach to-morrow!" said Jack, thinking to himself how very agreeably that would "come off," if it should be the same coach into which the "Widow Waddle" and her hopeful spouse were to pack themselves. "Well, ladies, I've done my duty—executed my commission. I'm much obliged by your civility, and glad to have satisfied you that as far as Mr. Salmon and myself are concerned, we had nothing to do with this unpleasant business.—Good night, ladies."

Saying which, Jack retired under a heavy fire of acknowledgments and reciprocated good wishes, and returned to the inn greatly relieved at finding the coast clear. He received the message that had been left for him ; and after revolving in his mind, over a glass of "hot mixture," the occurrences of the evening, and the information he had derived from the fair Thespian, satisfied himself that they all had their origin in his own ever-failing dexterity in attempting to wriggle out of difficulties, into which his unquenchable vanity and conceit were perpetually hurrying him.

After summing up the whole of the case, he resolved that the extraordinary conduct of his mother, coupled with the hypocrisy and worthlessness of her husband, fully justified his retiring in disgust, and leaving them to their own inventions. He therefore called for pen, ink, and paper, and having ascertained that the whole history

of the *émeute* at the playhouse was now known all over the inn, began, when the waiter produced them, to denounce the extraordinary conduct of the eccentric old lady, with whom he denied anything more than a casual acquaintance—she, as the reader may remember, having herself, before dinner, indignantly proclaimed their consanguinity to the chambermaid. Having concluded his letter addressed to Salmon,—announcing the absolute necessity of his starting by seven o'clock for the Isle of Wight, in order to avail himself of the offer of a seat in the carriage of a friend, whom he had met at the playhouse on his return; and having desired his affectionate love to his mother, signed himself Mr. Salmon's "faithful and sincere," and added in the postscript, "Don't forget to pay in the three hundred pounds to-morrow, or the next day as I shall have occasion to draw upon it," he folded and sealed the despatch, and proceeding to his room, desired to be called at half-past six, resolved to bolt before the "happy pair" were stirring.

CHAPTER XVIII.

It was not until after Mr. Brag had come to the resolution of evacuating Lewes, that he decided upon the place to which he should shift his head-quarters. Brighton he had no intention of visiting; and it was while he was in a state of perfect indecision upon the important point, firm only to the determination of "going," his eye happened to glance over the newspaper which lay on the table, and he perceived amongst the intelligence from the Isle of Wight, that his friend, as he called every man whom he had seen twice in his life—his friend Lord Wagley was at Cowes, with his "beautiful yacht, the Jigumaree;" and that the place was crammed with visitors, the harbour crowded with vessels, and, in short, that nothing upon the face of the earth or the water had ever been so gay and captivating as that exquisitely beautiful spot.

Jack's heart began to beat; he longed to try his fate once more. Like the tired soldier roused by the "brazen trumpet's sound," he longed to

—— "dare again the field."

The lord and his yacht—the good-natured lord too, his colleague in the arrangement of the steeple-chase—one of the few of his aristocratic friends who went the length of calling him Jack—nothing could suit better. It is true he was a crony of Lord Tom Towzle's; but Lord Tom was in Paris, or would be, before Jack got to Cowes; so that the disagreeable affair at Dover could not have reached "that tight little island;" therefore, as it seemed, no possible objection existed to his invasion of the Vectan shore.

To carry his scheme (having, as we know, resolved upon its adoption) into execution, our hero rose early, dressed hastily, and having engaged one of the men about the house to carry his small but convenient valise, in which, by some skill in the art of compression, he contrived to pack his wardrobe with a compactness equalled only by that in which hay for foreign service is squeezed into a portable state, he proceeded to "The White Hart," where, having dismissed his attendant, he ordered breakfast; and proposed encamping himself until the departure of his dear and respectable relations, who had rendered themselves much too notorious on the preceding evening to continue desirable associates in the good town of Lewes.

This march was another of the minor evils to which Jack was in the habit of subjecting himself by his constant efforts to be fine. In order to get rid of his entanglement with Jem and his lady, he felt it necessary to make a little history of a visionary friend and an imaginary chariot—in which chariot, by its owner's kindness, he was to be suddenly transported to the Isle of Wight—not recollecting that, taking the length of the proposed journey into consideration, no such early start could have been in the slightest degree necessary; a circumstance not very material in the present case, inasmuch as neither the slumbering James nor his suspicious spouse had established in their minds any very correct notion of the relative distances of the different parts of the British; or indeed any other empire upon the face of the earth.

To keep up the delusion which he felt it agreeable to play off, it became essential that he should not leave "The Star" in either post-chaise, stage-coach, or any other conveyance; because if he did so, as he must, conveniently to himself, have done, there would have been the evidence of the master of the house, the mistress, and all the servants, to prove to the Salmons that the redoubted "sporting character" had gone in no friend's chariot, but that he had transported himself towards the place of his destination in the said chaise, stage-coach, or whatever he might have selected for the purpose. To prevent this disclosure, therefore, he had to take all the unnecessary trouble which we have just described, and absolutely hide himself until some opportunity presented itself for escaping the violence of his mother, the lamentations of Salmon, the enquiries of Peckover, and probably the curiosity of the whole Patcham party, instead of driving off at any hour which might best have suited his convenience.

Truly, indeed, does the proverb say, that "pride knows no pain." One fiftieth part of the turmoil and exertion which Jack underwent to attain a character which he never could support, properly applied to the advancement of his prosperity and respectability in his natural sphere, would in all probability have secured

him ease and competence. However, ours is to describe rather than reason upon the conduct of people, and we therefore resume the narrative.

The earliness of the hour at which he directed his breakfast to be prepared, and the short time which he occupied in consuming it, afforded him the opportunity of watching the departure of the coach for London. Minutes seemed hours as he kept his eyes strained in every direction, listening with the most eager expectation for the rattle of the wheels and the clatter of the traces, which should announce the arrival at the door of "The Star" inn, of the vehicle destined, as he tremblingly anticipated, to contain for the next six hours the jarring elements—the fire and water—the oil and vinegar, embodied and humanized in the shapes of Mrs. Salmon and Miss Roseville, whose announcement to Jack of her departure the next morning was, as has been seen, instantly coupled in his mind with the possible—the almost probable—circumstance of her becoming the travelling companion of the venerable cateran whom she had so feelingly and so unconsciously denounced to her son the night before.

Should this be the case, thought Jack, there will be a slashing race, and no mistake. From the little he had seen of Molly Hogg, it was evident that a very little provocation would turn the radiant fire of love, which sparkled in her looks and countenance, into the forked lightning of indignant anger. The honeyed words which the sweet bard of Avon had taught to drop from her roseate lips, would in an instant be discarded for the expression of her own feelings in less poetic language; and any remark which his mother might happen to venture touching the use which the heroine made of the brilliant orbs with which nature had so liberally gifted her, would, he had little doubt, provoke some practical resentment on her part well calculated to render any compliment to a pair of black eyes as applicable to her antagonist as to herself, in a few minutes after it had been paid.

With all these forebodings in his mind, and hating Miss Hogg for her description of himself, and at the bottom of his heart feeling that her intimacy with Salmon was not any very satisfactory evidence as to the future comfort of the parent whom he had driven into the marriage, the reader may easily judge Jack's dismay when, after hearing the long wished-for wheels rolling along the street, he found the sound suddenly cease, and saw the coach stop at the door of the milliner's house at which the *aimable* Roseville had indicated to Salmon that she resided.

Nature so far struggled with conceit and vapidity in Jack's mind, that the moment he saw this occur, he felt disposed to rush from his retirement, fly to "The Star," admit the groundlessness of his excuse for absence, and advise his mother either to stay another

day, or, at all events, proceed by another vehicle to London. He quitted the window whence he had seen the arrival, and his hand was on the lock of the door of the parlour in which he was lodged, when his good resolution failed him, and he returned to watch the departure of the passengers. If he went out, he should be obliged to enter into a thousand explanations; if he gave his reasons why his mother had better not go, her anger would have induced her to "seek the battle," rather than "shun it when it came;" while if, on the other hand, she admitted the reasonableness of his suggestions, he should have her on his hands, the object of universal curiosity and conversation for four-and-twenty hours more. He therefore determined to let things take their course.

After keeping the coach waiting some ten minutes, Miss Hogg, enveloped in a huge cloak and shawls, made her appearance at the door, and stepped into the vehicle, followed by her "ma'," who permitted merit and genius to take precedence of age and maternity;—the elder lady of the two, bearing in her hand a huge basket with a handle and flaps, O. P. and P. S., evidently containing sundry papers of sandwiches, and a bottle of something, wherewith to refresh themselves during the journey.

"Well, said Jack to himself," that's it: now then for the blow-up!—But the coach still lingered; and Jack's sight was presently gratified by the sudden appearance of the "star" from London who had enacted Othello, enveloped also in a cloak, and accompanied by a friend and worshipper, who made a point of going to see him act let it be wheresoever it might. There are many small strugglers after a reputation for something, who pin themselves to some really deserving object of popular attention, and so make for themselves a kind of moon-like character, reflected from the sun of which they are the satellites. This was one.

The small thing, who was dressed in a cloak ditto to that of Mr. Teeardeyell, was a man of considerable fortune, which devolved upon him at the death of his father who had amassed it in trade; and having just come into possession of it at the period when the town, as it is called, was undecided between the merits of Mr. Teeardeyell at one theatre, and Mr. somebody else at the other, he attached himself to *his* faction, made a friend of its head, and presented him with a cane and cocked hat, the indubitable property of Garrick; a snuff-box which Addison gave Booth after his performance of Cato, on the inside of the lid of which, was this line by Swift—

"To the best Booth in the fair:"—

in fact, everything he could do to render his friendship for and association with his favourite lion notorious, the weak and wealthy jackal did.

When Brag saw the coach (licensed to carry only four insides,) thus freighted, his heart was relieved, and he watched its further progress to the door of "The Star" with confidence and security:—how well grounded the reader may imagine, when, after a brief pause, he beheld a ladder brought forth and placed against the hinder wheel of the machine, followed by his respected mother, handed out by her husband. The lady who was all muffled up and packed for travelling, and filled with solicitude lest "rude Boreas" might embarrass her in her ascent towards the elevation to which she aspired, never cast her eyes towards the coach window, but proceeded at once to mount. But Salmon, however assiduous and active in helping her up, and in doing what she called "keeping her things down," unluckily for his peace cast one glance towards the "four insides," and in that glance assured himself of the presence of Miss Roseville and her ma'.

In every grief there is a gradation of sorrow: that Molly Hogg should be in the coach was a cause of wretchedness rendered more painful by the anxious expectation of what would inevitably happen when they met wherever, as the phrase goes, the coach stopped to dine. To prevent his bride's joining in that repast he knew would be impossible,—and then what a scene! Yet, horrid as this anticipation was, it was trifling by comparison with that which must have happened if they had secured inside places. Nothing, he was quite convinced, had ever occurred in the world at all to equal the consequences of such a juxta-position, unless, indeed, it was the affair of the Kilkenny cats, which ferocious animals, as the deeply "*redde*" in Miller's History of Ireland, and the rest of the world know, fought in a saw-pit until nothing was left of either of them but their tails.

Away rolled the coach, and while Mrs. Salmon was making herself snug and comfortable, Jim was calculating what was best to be done. He knew that they were to stop at Godstone; he knew too well Titsy's admiration of the mutton chops there. Could he by any means break the ladder which they would bring out to facilitate her descent, or rather effect it, for, without that, she could not leave her point of elevation! A thousand things suggested themselves, but one after the other was discarded from his mind as impracticable, until, before they had got to Uckfield, every hope he had cherished was destroyed, every scheme he had imagined blown to atoms, by a remark made by his better and his bigger half, that the air must be uncommon wholesome, because she "felt so peckish in spite of her bad spirits:"—the injured Titsy still playing the offended wife, but little thinking that the delicate, Venus-like occiput of her hated rival was within an inch of her own great toe, and separated from it only by a bit of leather.

In this state of affairs, progressing at the rate of nearly ten miles

an hour, we must leave the stage-coach party for the present, and return to our hero, who, however much he shuddered at the appearance of his mother packed amongst the fish, fowl, and firkins, destined for London use, consoled himself with the certainty that, by a little management on the part of Salmon, and the exercise of a little discretion on the part of Miss Hogg, she might escape a collision which, for all their sakes, he so much dreaded.

Jack's next thoughts were devoted to himself and his own purposes. He ascertained that his best and shortest mode of reaching the Isle of Wight was to proceed forthwith to Brighton, and thence, as he chose, pursue his road by Chichester, to Portsmouth, or Southampton, as he best pleased. At Brighton, Jack had no intention of staying, and as he should arrive there early, the chances were that he might find a conveyance suited to his purpose before the afternoon.

It would be quite useless to follow him in his uninteresting progress to Cowes, to which place he had really directed his landlady in Lambeth to despatch him a fresh supply of clothes, resolved to make himself happy under the auspices of his noble friend, and if possible repair the damage which the events of the last few weeks had done him. Suffice it to say that the reader may safely imagine Jack leaning over the railings of the yacht club-house, having, after his London fashion, obtained ingress so far, by the countenance of the much-respected nobleman upon whom he had fastened himself.

Cowes was, as the newspaper had announced, extremely lively; its picturesque harbour was, as had been said, richly studded with gay yachts, while the roads were graced by the presence of one or two of His Majesty's craft, and various ships, brigs, and schooners, waiting for a wind to thread the Needles, and wend their way towards their several places of destination. Jack felt at ease as his ferret-like eyes twinkled at the laughing promenaders before him, and his little heart began to beat with the ambition of becoming a member of the Yacht Club himself. There was something *distinguished* in the button, and the society was so agreeable; in fact it was '*the thing*;' and revolving it much in his mind before he broached his desire to his friend Lord Wagley, there appeared but three objections to his carrying it into immediate execution. The first was, that, not having a yacht, he was not qualified to become a member: the second was, that, if he were qualified, he might not be received: and the third was, that if he had the qualification, and was elected, he hated the sea, sailing, boating, and everything connected with them, to the bottom of his heart; that hate not being altogether unmixed with a feeling which no man might venture personally to attribute to him with impunity. He was, nevertheless, very much of the opinion of Anacharsis, who classed those

who committed themselves to the mercy of the wind and waves, amongst the dead; and not having the advantage of an acquaintance with any of those accommodating Lapland ladies, who Dr. Heywood tells us, (in his 'Hierarchies of Angels,')

— "winds to merchants tell,
 Making their cov'nant when and how they please;
 They may with prosperous weather cross the seas,
 As thus,—they in a handkerchief fast tie
 Three knots; and lose the first, and by and by
 You find a gentle gale blow from the shore:
 Open the second, it encompasses more
 To fill the sails: When you the third untie
 Th' intemperate gusts grow vehement and high;—"

Jack felt certain qualms while thinking of the absolute necessity of going afloat, which produced a kind of sea-sickness by anticipation. But then what were his anticipations, apprehensions, or antipathies, when put into the opposite scale to the privileges, (butter included,) which his admission into such a body as the Yacht Club would confer upon him!

This notion had taken full possession of his mind, and he waited only for a favourable opportunity of opening his heart to his noble friend, whose warmth and good-nature were so satisfactory to him, that in two or three days he became as brisk as ever, and was pushing himself in every possible quarter, and, it must be owned, completely succeeded in planting himself in the character of quality tag upon a Lady Lavinia Newbiggen, and her niece Miss Hastings, to whom he had been presented by his noble friend, who was delighted in the highest degree to get anybody to relieve him in paying those delicate attentions which her ladyship exacted from the little circle by which she was surrounded, where everything agreeable was to be found, her ladyship's own absolutely indispensable presence alone excepted. Of her ladyship and her charming niece, more anon.

It was when Wagley and Jack had been left together, *côte-à-côte*, after the first dinner at her ladyship's to which he had been invited, that he felt himself able to break to his lordship the secret of his great desire to become a member of the "Royal Squadron."

"And a deuced good thing too," said Lord Wagley. "I am not sure, however, that we can ballot for you this year, even if you had a yacht to qualify with; but—of that I'm not certain—the best thing you can do is to get a qualification as soon as possible."

"Oh," said Jack; "what—get a yacht,—out and out,—and no mistake?"

"That is essential," said his lordship, "and she must be one of more than forty tons. Now, the opportunity is tempting—there is at this moment in the harbour—'gad I can show her to you from

these windows if the moon is up—one of the prettiest things that ever swam,—seventy-six tons, there or thereabouts,—cutter-rigged,—all copper fastened,—coppered to the bends,—excellent cabin, mahogany fittings,—uncommon well found in stores,—ready for sea to-morrow,—two regular suits of sails,—belongs to a member well known in these parts,—has won two prizes, and is to be had a regular bargain: there's an opportunity," said his lordship, "which ought not to be lost."

"It is indeed," said Jack;—"built of mahogany, and fastened with copper,—all right down, straight up, and no mistake?"

"Not exactly that," said his lordship, "but she is perfect of her class,—dirt-cheap."

"What may be the damage?" said Jack.

"Why," said his lordship, "take everything as it stands,—ready for a start as she is,—eight hundred and fifty sovereigns, and no haggling!"

"Eight hundred and fifty sovereigns!" said Jack, "that's a lump of money for mahogany and copper!"

"Money," exclaimed the peer, "my dear fellow, the chances are, that if Chipstead was not hard up, you wouldn't get her for a thousand."

"I'll think of it," said Jack. "I confess it would be uncommon pleasant. I don't like, you see, my lord, to find every fellow taking water, while I stand on the shore, like an old hen looking at young ducks."

"I assure you she's worth your attention and the money," said his lordship, who had got her for an equivocal debt of the before-named Chipstead, who, happening to miss his return for a borough which he had before misrepresented, thought it advisable to take French leave of the Yacht Club and the Fleet together, and bestow himself securely at Boulogne-sur-mer. His lordship's animated description of the beauties of the abandoned 'Psyche' therefore, however nautically just, were not altogether disinterested.

The wine,—the discussion,—the hope,—the expectation, all combined to confuse and obfuscate Jack's intellect; who, having in the space of less than a week determined that something really *was* to be done in the family of Lady Lavinia very greatly to his advantage, seeing that her ladyship herself paid him marked attentions, while she always appeared to recommend her beautiful niece to his particular notice, and that impressed with an idea of his wealth,—a notion with spread like wildfire at Cowes,—they had resolved upon a line of conduct which, if carried to its extreme point, might after all retrieve his past defeats, and achieve the great object of his ambition,—was determined, as far as in *him* lay, to make a last great effort to soar above his own sphere, and taking an exactly opposite course from his presumptuous prede-

cessor Icarus, carry his point by getting entirely rid of the wax with which he fancied his wings were clogged.

The man who has lost and lost again, calls to Crockford for more counters, feeling a fresh confidence after each succeeding loss, and hoping, Antæus like, to gain new strength from every fall: goes on, until at last his calling fails, and he arouses himself to a sad conviction of the vanity of the delusion by which he has been led to pursue ill fortune to extremity:—so did Jack persevere in a course, his discomfitures in which one should have thought, must, as he would himself say, “have taken the shine out of him:”—but no; here he was again beginning a fresh pursuit, and, as it appeared upon a more important scale, and with more extensive means.

Lady Lavinia Newbiggen was universally voted a nuisance. She was silly and sentimental, and wanted to pass for a blue. She affected to be charmed with everything odd;—“a character,” as she used to call anybody distinguished for doing anything, was her delight; an artist was her idol, although she could not distinguish between a Vandyke and a Varley; an author was a jewel of inestimable price, although she never read a book. To *her*, a man who had been up in a balloon, or down in a diving-bell, was something; even a celebrity gained by wearing a particularly shaped hat, or an oddly cut coat, was important in her eyes, and, accordingly, wherever she was, her house was filled with all the lions and tigers of the society in which she was set down.

Brag had been presented to her as *the* celebrated steeple-hunter, and the best amateur jockey on the turf. *That* was enough to secure him a favourable reception, although she hated races, and never went to any meeting but Ascot, and then invariably shut her eyes while the horses were running.

The unquestioned success of Lady Lavinia in having established the reputation of being the greatest bore upon earth, did not obtain for her a corresponding admiration on the part of the rest of the world, who were not so ravenously fond of rarities as she either was, or professed to be, and therefore the attentions of Brag were most acceptable to her. There he was, lounging and giggling with her ladyship, who was sitting on a bench placed outside the door of the house she occupied, on the little grass-plot dignified with the name of garden, while Fanny Hastings, who had neither heart to give nor ears to lend, lingered languidly and listlessly by the side of her aunt. From this “shady blest retreat” they saw yacht after yacht depart, Lord Wagley’s among the rest, and not an invitation to “sail” came from any one of them to poor Lady Lavinia.

“Why haven’t *you* a yacht, Mr. Brag?” said Lady Lavinia.

That question settled the affair:—Jack’s little heart beat ninety to the minute.

"Then Fanny and I," continued her ladyship, "might perhaps be favoured with a cruise."

Another palpitation at a considerably increased rate.

"For my part," said her ladyship, "I cannot bear what are called common-place people. These young men are all very well, and they are people of rank, and suitable, and all that—but I am, as you know, only excited by something piquante;—don't you understand?"

"Exactly, my lady," said Jack; "straight up, right down, and no mistake."

"No mistake!" said her ladyship—"I hate mistakes—yes.—Well then, if you had a yacht——"

"I *have* one, my lady," said Jack.

"Have you?" exclaimed her ladyship.

"The——pooh!—I forget her name," said Jack, "I only bought her last night. Pooh!—something beginning with an S."

"An S!" said her ladyship.

"An S!" said Fanny, looking at Brag with an interest such as she would have felt if her eyes had rested upon his amiable mother's tortoiseshell cat.

"Yes," said Jack, "an S, and no mistake: and there she is, looking uncommon nice—all regular."

"That," said Lady Lavinia—"that is Captain—what's the man's name, Fanny, who was so famous last year for wearing yellow boots?—Captain—Chipstead."

"That's he," said Jack.

"She is called 'The Psyche,'" said her ladyship.

"Well," said Brag, "I hinted as much."

"Oh! I see," said her ladyship;—"you are so droll, it's quite delightful! Psyche with an S—ha, ha!—how odd you are! And you have bought her?"

"Out and out," said Jack.

This certainly was not the fact; but the moment her ladyship expressed her wish that he should have a yacht, her desire, combined with his own wish to qualify for the Club, determined him. What she had discovered so exceedingly droll in his mode of spelling Psyche, Jack could not make out; he naturally thinking—knowing nothing, of his own knowledge, of the lovely lively lady with papilionaceous wings, that her name was written as it sounded, and being no more inclined to favour her with the letter P at its beginning, than he would have been to indulge Ptolemy or a ptarmigan with a similar favour.

"She is a very pretty yacht," said Fanny.

"Delighted to hear you say so," said Jack.

"What is her complement?" asked Lady Lavinia.

"What! Miss Fanny's complement?" said Jack—"it's everything to me!"—and he looked expressively.

"No," said Lady Lavinia, "Psyche's complement."

"Ah!" said Jack, "that's what I meant—Miss H's compliment to Psyche."

"Oh, you *are* so droll!" said her ladyship, resolved to give her new lion or tiger a credit to which certainly he had no claim whatever: "how many have you?"

"What!" said Jack, wholly at a loss to answer a question, of the purport of which he had not the slightest earthly comprehension—"eh! how many what?"

"Men, my aunt means," said Fanny.

"Men," said Jack; "oh, only my own man, my butler, and two or three livery servants, and my grooms."

"Well, you certainly are the most comical creature in the world!" said Lady Lavinia; "you *will* misunderstand everything one says: so odd—isn't he, Fanny? What number of men have you for your yacht? There now, you can't make a joke of *that*."

"Oh, the yacht!" said Jack; "why, to tell you the truth, my lady, till Wagley comes back I can't exactly say: he has what he calls the selling of her; and—so I put it all into Wagley's hands; and he will manage it all, smack smooth, and no mistake."

"He is a nice young man," said Lady Lavinia, sighing, "but he hasn't a bit of sentiment about him."

"Indeed!" said Jack, not in the least understanding what her ladyship meant, "that's a very sad business."

"I don't care about it," said her ladyship, "because I don't feel that sort of interest in him which genius, or talent, or even eccentricity excites in my mind. He is a distant connexion of mine, and therefore I cherish him, although, as I tell him, he is horribly ungallant about his yacht. I think when 'The Psyche' is in commission, her master will not be so cross."

"I'm sure," said Jack, "I shall be happy to lend her to your ladyship whenever you and Miss Fanny like to go out in her."

"Oh!" said Fanny, "that's worse than Lord Wagley:—what will the sail be without *your* society, Mr. Brag?"

"You are uncommon kind," said Jack.

"I only speak for my aunt," said Fanny.

"My dear child," said Lady Lavinia, "I can speak for myself, thank you!—Have you been long on the turf, Mr. Brag?"

"Ever since my father was put under it, ma'am," said Jack: "but I think I shall give it up now, marry, and settle—that's the plan, and no mistake."

"Most rationally resolved," said her ladyship.

"There's only one hitch, my lady," said Jack—"I must get some other body's consent as well as my own."

"I should think *that* no difficulty," said Lady Lavinia.

"You are very good, my lady," said Jack, looking silly and shy, and feeling sure that he had made a regular hit.

"For my part," said Lady Lavinia, "I believe I am not a fair judge of the comforts and blessings of a married life, for never certainly had woman so happy a lot. My poor Henry was certainly one of the kindest of husbands! Our felicity was destroyed in the third year of our union by his untimely death. I believe—dear Fanny does not recollect him—I believe there never was a happier couple. Fanny dear, go into the drawing-room, and show it to Mr. Brag!"

Jack, who, like his friend Lord Wagley, had not a bit of sentiment about him, could by no means enter into the sort of feeling exhibited by Lady Lavinia towards the memory of her departed husband, who had been deposited in the family vault of all the Orleans for the last fourteen years; but "in course," as he would have said, without knowing, or even guessing what it was he was going to see, he followed the fair Fanny into the room, in which was deposited an ebony case, the doors of which she slowly opened, and exhibited to his sight the portrait of a stout, fresh-coloured young man, dressed in the uniform of some volunteer corps of cavalry, wearing flashes, with a profusion of well-powdered hair fluttering in the breeze, as he stood without his hat, leaning his left arm on the saddle of his horse, which pawed the ground behind him,—his right hand resting on the hilt of his sword.

Jack looked at it. Fanny observed that it was considered a good likeness. Jack made a little noise between a hem and a grunt, took out his pocket-handkerchief, blew his nose;—Fanny shut up the case.

"Well," said Lady Lavinia, as he returned to the garden, "you have seen it."

"Yes, my lady," said Jack—"fine man. Do you happen to recollect where he got that bright bay which he is leaning upon? It's as like one that I have got down at my little place in Surrey, as one pea to another."

"No, Mr. Brag," said her ladyship, "I recollect nothing but my own sad loss; the accessories to the likeness have no interest for me."

"The gentleman was in the army," said Jack, who was terribly puzzled what to say, and above all felt the greatest difficulty in pronouncing the name of the dear departed, seeing that it was by no means euphonic. What he *had* said, however, was fatal to his own tranquillity for the next hour or two.

Lady Lavinia had fallen in love with Mr. Newbiggen when she was eighteen or nineteen, he being the son of a most respectable man, who kept what is called "an everything shop" in a fashion-

able watering-place at which her ladyship and her noble father happened to be staying.

This attachment, which at the first blush certainly seems as little sentimental as may be, was struggled with, by the gentle Lavinia, in vain. Her efforts to conquer it brought on a severe illness; and a confession made to her indulgent parent the Earl of Screddington, whose only child she was, obtained from him his sanction to the match, under certain circumstances, and upon certain conditions.

The first condition was, that Mr. Newbiggen the elder should retire from trade, and establish himself as a private gentleman in some part of England, as far distant as possible from his then residence, and that no intercourse was to be allowed between the families after the marriage: this was a hard and heart-breaking stipulation for Henry's mother; however, his lordship made considerable pecuniary sacrifice to induce the old folks to accede to it, and they accordingly retired from business into Yorkshire.

The next condition was, that as Mr. Newbiggen's name would devolve upon Lady Lavinia Orlebar, and be thus connected forever with that highly honourable house, he should forthwith repair to London, and put Clarendieux, or some of his co-mates in arms, in possession of whatever family facts or anecdotes he could collect, in order that, previous to the marriage, he might get his genealogy properly arranged to meet the public eye, so as to give a weight and respectability to the name of Newbiggen, which it appeared very considerably to want. These stipulations having been complied with, Lord Screddington got Mr. Newbiggen into the volunteer cavalry of his own county, and converted him into a captain with the least possible delay: it was in the uniform of this rank he had been painted, and the picture and the pedigree were the constant subjects of Lady Lavinia's conversation with every fresh acquaintance she made. The merits and amiability of her lost Henry were never rehearsed without an immediate reference to his family tree, a perusal of which would unquestionably establish the antiquity and aristocracy of his family, and put at rest at once any hints or innuendoes of an inferiority disparaging to the Orlebars.

"Perhaps, Mr. Brag," said her ladyship, "as you are so good as to take an interest in our family affairs, you would like to look at Mr. Newbiggen's tree? Fanny dear, open the box, and let Mr. Brag see it; it is most beautifully got up, and does infinite credit to the *Heralds' College*."

Jack's ideas were now greatly confused. What Mr. Newbiggen's tree was, puzzled him greatly; and when he saw the ample parchment removed from its resting-place, his perplexity was very little reduced.

Butler says, "A herald calls himself a king, because he has authority to hang, draw, and quarter—arms: for, assuming a juris-

diction over the distributive titles of honour, as far as words extend, he gives himself as great a latitude that way, as other magistrates use to do where they have authority, and would enlarge it as far as they can. It is true he can make no lords, nor knights, of himself, *but as many squires and gentlemen as he pleases, and adopt them into what family they have a mind.*

His dominions abound with all sorts of cattle, fish, and fowl, and all manner of manufactures, besides whole fields of gold and silver, which he magnificently bestows upon his followers. The language he uses is barbarous, as being but a dialect of pedlar's French, or the Egyptian, though of a loftier sound, and in its propriety affecting brevity, as the other does verbosity.

"His business is like that of all the schools,—to make plain things hard with perplexed methods and insignificant terms, and then appear learned in making them plain again. He professes arms,—not for war, but for ornament; and yet makes the basest things in the world weapons of worshipful bearings. He is wiser than the fellow who sold his ass and kept the shadow for his own use, for he sells the shadow (that is, the picture) and keeps the ass himself. His chief province is at funerals, where he commands in chief, marshals the *tristitia irritamenta*, and, like a gentleman-sewer to the worms, serves up the feast with all punctual formality. He is a kind of necromancer, and can raise the dead out of their graves, and make them marry and give birth to people of whom they never even heard in their lifetime.

"His coat is like the king of Spain's dominions,—all skirts, and hangs as loose about him; and his neck is the waist, like the picture of Nobody, with his breeches fastened to his collar. He will sell the head, or the single joint of a beast, or fowl, as dear as the whole body—like a pig's head in Bartholomew Fair; and after, put off the rest to his customers at the same rate. His arms, being utterly out of use in war since guns came up, have been translated to dishes and cups, as the ancients used their precious stones, according to the poet, '*Gemmas ad pocula transfert a gladiis*,' and since are like to decay every day more and more, for since he gave citizens coats of arms, gentlemen have made bold to take their letters of mark by way of reprisal. The hangman has a recipe to mar all his work in a moment; for, by nailing the wrong end of a 'scutcheon upwards upon a gibbet, all the honour and gentility extinguishes of itself, like a candle that is held with the flame downwards. Other arms are made for the spilling of blood; but his only purify and cleanse it, like scurvy-grass; for a small dose taken by his prescription, will refine that which is as base and gross as bull's blood, (which the Athenians used to poison withal) to any degree of purity."

Butler's description is somewhat elaborated, and in no small degree illiberal in its reflections upon the College: but if he could

have seen the genealogy of the deceased Mr. Newbiggen, whatever he might have found to justify some part of his observations, he could not have failed to admire the mingled boldness and ingenuity with which it had been manufactured.

Jack glanced his eye over the parchment, and was going to make some particularly absurd remark, when Lady Lavinia desired Fanny to give him "the papers" to read.

"I should like you to look over them," said her ladyship. "Fanny dear, let us leave Mr. Brag for a little;—and then we will go in to luncheon."

Saying which, the ladies retired; Lady Lavinia affecting to be greatly affected, in order to give our hero the opportunity of informing himself with respect to the ancestry of her late husband, a course which, as has already been observed, she invariably adopted, in order to confute and confound any reports—which mischievous people were but too ready to circulate—tending to disparage the respectability of Mr. Newbiggen, or, what she more disliked,—misrepresent the character of her affection for him, from which their union resulted.

Brag opened the sort of MS. pamphlet which had been delivered to him; but he certainly did not think of its contents. His eyes rested on the *Psyche*, and his thoughts reverted to the statement he had made, as regarded its purchase, to Lady Lavinia—then to the advantages to be derived from her patronage—then the possibility of his election into the Club;—in short, he felt himself upon the edge of a precipice,—he must either jump boldly, clear his present difficulties, and land upon higher ground;—or "be for ever fall'n," and he felt, above all, that he had no time to lose.

Having turned all his own personal affairs in his mind, he proceeded to read the honourable record which he held in his hand.

NEWBIGGEN OF BUMBLESFORD.

This ancient and honourable family is descended from Hugo de Hoagues, one of the followers of King William the Conqueror, who married, on the 19th of August 1058, Hermengilda, Duchess of Coutance, daughter of Reginald d'Evreux, by Margaret, great-niece of the Emperor Charlemagne.

After the Conquest we find the family of de Hoagues settled in Kent.

Stephen de Hoagues, of Tenterden, married, March the 6th, 1108, Emma, daughter of Sir Trystram Dummer, by Florence, daughter and co-heiress of Robert Chittenden, who was afterwards knighted by King Henry the First, on the 4th of September 1119, in memory of the great services he had rendered to his late queen Matilda, daughter of Malcolm king of Scotland, who died on the 1st of the preceding May.

Stephen had seventeen children by his wife, nine of whom survived him. He died April 1, 1151, having been married forty-three years. He was succeeded by

Stephen de Hoaques, who assumed the name of Hoaxley, of Tenterden, born March 4, 1109. He married Alice, daughter of Sir Walter Fysheton, of Cromlie in the county of Huntingdon; and by her, who died July 7, 1162, he had

Margaret, married to Sir Hugh Gamstock, afterwards created Baron Gamstock, who died without issue.

Of the younger branches of the family of Hoaques there are no distinct records. One son, it is believed, was educated for the church, became a cardinal, and was proposed for the Tiara; another rose to great eminence in the state; and the youngest sister went to France, where she espoused a French nobleman of the highest rank.

Stephen Hoaxley survived his wife Alice but three years, having deceased on the 9th of March, 1165. On his death, it appears that the family estates at Tenterden were sold; for in the year 1169 we find the ancient manor-house of Homebag, or Hommbug, in the possession of Stephen Newcome, of whose genealogy a long account is given by Lyall, in his "Researches." His wife was great-great-great-grand-daughter of Owen Glmdrwg, a near relation of Eglmd, who was some time Prince of Pŵys.

By this lady Mr. Newcome had a numerous family, who subsequently quitted Kent, and settled in the neighbourhood of Leicester. His third son was created a baron, in the year 1238, by Henry the Third, whose queen stood sponsor to his only daughter, Eleanor, who was named after her illustrious godmother. She was born November 11, 1240; and married, May 6, 1259, Wynkin de Nethersole, to whom her large fortune devolved, upon the death of her father, on the 8th of August, 1271.

The Lady de Nethersole survived her husband, and married a second time, on the 12th of March 1279, the first-cousin of her former husband,—Bertram de Nethersole, by whom she had several children. This branch of the family intermarried with the Mowbrays, Herings, Russells, Spencers, Fitzwalters, Courtenays, and various other noble houses.

In the reign of George the Second the family of the Nethersoles were possessed of considerable landed property in Gloucestershire, of which county Mr. Isaac Nethersole was foreman of the grand jury in the year 1759. His daughter Anne, by Margaret Alicia, first-cousin to the Honourable Patrick O'Callaghan, of Sculduddery in the county of Tipperary, married, June 9th, 1754, Sir Thomas Walkinghame, knight and alderman of the city of London, who had by her,

Thomas,—Died young:

Anne,—Born May 1762;—married, December 21, 1778, John Hogmore, of Dilberry, in the county of Gloucester, who, dying, bequeathed his paternal estates to his nephew George Stamford Bamford Hogmore, Esq.; from whom a portion of them descended, by purchase, to the present owner, Isaac John Newbiggen, of Bumblesford, Esq. now the representative of that respectable and ancient family.

Mr. Newbiggen married, July 7, 1779, Miss Margaret Tibbs, of a very ancient and highly honourable family in Cumberland, by whom he has issue,—

Henry Theophilus Newbiggen, born May 12, 1784, a captain in the Flimsy volunteer corps of cavalry, a vestryman of the parish of Gammonby, and one of the trustees of the Puddlesford turnpike-road; married, February 14, 1810, the Lady Lavinia Anne Elizabeth Catharine Jemisseta Orlebar, only surviving daughter of the Right Honourable Francis John Earl of Screddington, by whom he has no issue.

ARMS. Sa. a fesse engrailed Or, between three Coffee-biggens proper.

CREST. The sun in splendour, rising from clouds, all ppr.

MOTTO. “*Begin anew.*”

QUARTERINGS.

FYSHETON.	DUMMER.
GAMSTOCK.	GLMDRWG.
HOWARD.	BOTELER.
RUSSEL.	DE COURCY.
SPENCER.	MONTMORENCY.
COURTENAY.	FITZALLAN.
MURRAY.	NETHERSOLE.
CAMPBELL.	TIBBS.
PERCY.	GAMMON.

Country Seats—Bumblesford Grange, Yorkshire. Newbiggen House, Kent.

Town Residence—Lower Brook Street.

Jack had scarcely finished this valuable specimen of heraldic research, brought to such an obvious and satisfactory conclusion, before the ladies returned to summon him to luncheon, where, as the after-part of the day is destined to be rather eventful to him, we will leave him, and begin a fresh chapter for fresh occurrences.

CHAPTER XIX.

It was late before Lord Wagley returned from his cruise. He had been to Southampton; and Brag was anxiously awaiting his ar-

rival to talk over the affair of the yacht, when, as he came ashore, he beheld his lordship accompanied in his boat by a stranger. Under the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed, every newcomer awakened his apprehensions lest something should *écarter* which might militate against his election into the Club, now rendered an object of first-rate importance to him by the expression of Lady Lavinia's wishes regarding "The Psyche."

The boat touched the sloping *chaussée*, and my lord leaped on shore: the stranger followed. His lordship hailed Jack in his usual friendly and familiar manner—so far all was right, and "no mistake." He next introduced the stranger to him with a greater air of *empressement* than appeared to Jack absolutely necessary: the manner implied that they would become extremely intimate,—or rather that circumstances somehow connected their fates, the true meaning and extent of which Mr. Brag could not clearly comprehend.

"My dear Brag," said his lordship, "this is Mr. Leveret, my solicitor and friend."

Jack bowed in his best fashion, but there was something in the expression of the newcomer's countenance which puzzled him.

"His visit," continued his lordship, "is one which mingles business with pleasure. He tells me that some infernal farmer down at that place Wigglesford, or Waggleford, or whatever it is called, has given notice of action about our trespassing in the steeplechase, and that you, like myself, are one of the defendants:—have you heard of it before?"

"Heard of it!" said Jack; "all I heard of it was, that a queer-looking chap came into one of my apartments at the hotel at Eastbourne, and gave me a long slip of paper looking like an overgrown cheque, and told me something about a trespass; in course, I took it: and when I asked him what next I was to do, he told me to put it in my pocket, which accordingly I did, and never meant to trouble my head about it any more one way or another, and no mistake."

"It is fortunate," said Mr. Leveret, "that I have run down to see his lordship upon the point: there are seven defendants included in the action, and whatever may be the result, you, sir, should be at least put upon a footing with the others."

"In course," said Jack: "what must I do then?"

"In the first place," said Leveret, "we must put in an appearance; but that, such is the benign character of the English law, would have been done for you by a fiction, which would, involuntarily on your part, carry you forward in the case; but as I am here, if you will tell me whom your professional advisers are, I can communicate with them, and make the thing perfect easy."

"I have no professional adviser," said Jack, "except Mr. Groat,

my apothecary, and I haven't much need of *him*. I find air and exercise——"

"You misunderstand me, sir," said Leveret—"I mean a legal adviser."

"I never had such a thing in my life," said Jack, "and don't know where to find one."

"Put your affairs into Leveret's hands," said Lord Wagley; "you will find him a man of honour, and a most agreeable companion: his advice upon any point, whether professional or not, is invaluable."

"Your lordship does me too much honour," said Leveret. "I am sure I shall be extremely happy to do anything in *my* power to serve any friend of your lordship's."

"In course I shall be too happy," said Jack; "so, if you please, we'll consider that settled."

Leveret bowed again.

"Shall we be very considerably smashed," said Lord Wagley, "in this absurd business?"

"It is impossible at present, my lord," said Leveret, "to judge how things will turn out. A verdict against us, I look upon to be inevitable. But I am told that the plaintiff, Grindlestone, has taken up the matter not half so much upon the ground of the trespass, as because the newspapers stated the property trespassed on, to belong to Mr. Brag. This has nettled him; besides, he has a wife, who has taken offence at something which my new and excellent friend has done, and who, as I hear, has worried him into this action accordingly."

"That's just it," said Jack; "the female sex are always at the bottom of everything. I certainly *do* recollect her, at the time we were looking over the country thereabouts; and I suppose it was because I did not pay my compliments to her in a more—what you call—slap-up manner, that she got cantankerous."

"Why," said Leveret, smiling, "the story which I have heard, sir, does not impute any backwardness on *your* part. I have seen Messrs. Tapps, Tatlock, and Shackleton, of Pump Court, Temple,—at least Mr. Tatlock, who manages this case for the house,—and I really believe the whole thing originates in some petty spite."

"Petticoat spite, according to your version," said Lord Wagley; "but don't you think, Leveret, we might compromise the affair?"

"Compromise, my lord," said Leveret, "is the last thing I should recommend: it is never satisfactory, even in the best of cases. A matter referred to arbitration, let it be decided how it may, convinces nobody—pleases nobody. No: I should say, let it go into Court: we shall retain Sir Frederick, Sir William, and two or three more of the best——"

"What!—to defend this thing?" said Lord Wagley.

"To be sure, my lord," said Leveret. "We then fight them double-handed: by retaining the good ones, we not only get them ourselves, but hinder *them* from obtaining their services. We'll give them the Attorney and Solicitor-General, if they choose to have them; but it is everything to nail the talent:—that's it, my lord."

"And what damages will they get?" said Lord Wagley.

"There's no accounting for the fancies of juries," said Leveret:—"may be twenty pounds—may be five hundred. In point of fact, the question is one simply of trespass, by which no positive mischief has been done, and therefore no special damages can be sought: it is a mere thing of right, and Mrs. Grindlestone, who sticks up for her husband's privileges, is as I have already said, the great inciting cause of the proceeding."

Jack was by no means pleased with the pertinaciousness with which Mr. Leveret adhered to his opinion as to the share Mrs. Grindlestone had in the lawsuit, because he well recollected having been extremely civil, as he called it, to the lady, who was a remarkable pretty woman, free in her manner, and lively in her conversation; but who, for that very reason, did not exactly admire the conduct which our little hero had been pleased to adopt in the course of the only dialogue which passed between them, and in which Jack had thought proper to suit the action to the word, and endeavour to make himself most particularly agreeable by a practical illustration of his tender feelings towards her. Of this *tête-à-tête* Jack had never said one syllable to anybody; and, now that the animosity of the lady exhibited itself in so violent and revengeful a manner he thought it quite as well to keep his secret, and endeavour to impress the minds of the lord and the lawyer with the notion that her anger had been excited rather by his neglect of *her* advances, than his own presumption and impertinence.

The conversation, as far as law was concerned, soon terminated. Jack was regularly put under Leveret's care, and with the appearance of dinner ended all farther discussion. Everything was *en train*; the matter was in Leveret's hands, and nothing could be better; and Jack, who, so long as he got rid of anything unpleasant at the moment, cared little for results, tried back upon the confident assertion of the clerk of Messrs. Tapps, Tatlock, and Shackleton, that he need not trouble himself any more about it; and out of this assurance, and the gaiety and ease with which his newly acquired acquaintance and councillor spoke of the business, he derived so much satisfaction, that when the wine had twice or thrice circulated after dinner, he felt as light as air, and perfectly careless of consequences.

The moment he had acquired confidence enough to revert to his favourite—his engrossing topic, he resumed his observations on "The Psyche"—his desire to have a yacht—his special desire to have that particular yacht.

"Well," said Lord Wagley, "nothing can come off more opportunely : Leveret knows all the circumstances of the case, and how I come to have the selling of her. If you like to have her, I'll make it perfectly easy to you: you shall give me a bill at your own date; and I would not, I declare to you, press the thing, only I know she is a bargain;—in fact, a bank-note."

"Your lordship is very good," said Jack. "I own I don't know much of yachting—but she looks a good-un; and I have more reasons than one for wishing to be—eh?—you know."

"I understand," said his lordship. "And now I tell you what—Leveret and you talk it over to-morrow; whatever *he* thinks fair about it, I agree to, now. He can act rather as a mutual friend than a lawyer,—and so—you settle it all between you: he knows what Chipstead gave for her, and the circumstances under which she is to be sold—so, there now—"

"I shall be too happy to do anything in my power, said Leveret, who was a remarkably gentlemanlike man, and evidently well-disposed towards his noble client and his curious guest.

"I fancy," said Lord Wagley, whose great object was to sell the yacht, "'The Psyche' will not be long without a mistress—eh, Brag? You are always dangling, I see, at Lady Lavinia's."

"Umph!" said Jack—"I like that sort of society. Somehow she knows a great deal of one thing and another—and is uncommon good-natured to *me*: as for Miss Hastings, she is what I call a regular beauty, and no mistake."

"Yes," said Lord Wagley, "handsome enough, but poor, and over head and ears in love with an author,—one of her aunt's lions, who writes poetry—'Sonnets to her Eyebrow,'—and reads it to her, when he can find an opportunity. The Lady Lavinia likes to have him at her little parties, because he has got a name; but she has expressed her opinion pretty clearly to Miss Fanny as to the nature of her acquaintance—talks first of his merits and accomplishments, then of his want of money and the precariousness of authorship,—prohibits her niece from entertaining anything but a platonic friendship for him, and then invites him, night after night, to recite poems and sing love-songs for the amusement of her visitors. Lady Lavinia herself has a large income; but Fanny, who is a daughter of her only sister, who died young, and soon after her marriage, has but little: the whole bulk of the property went to the present Lord Scredington, who was a nephew of the late earl. My belief is," added his lordship, "that Lady Lavinia,

although she is my fifteenth cousin, or some such thing, would be nothing loth to become a wife again."

"Yet," said Jack, delighted with what he heard, "she talks a great deal of her *first*."

"To be sure," said his lordship; "she thinks, by showing how devoted she was to *him*, to induce somebody to be his successor. And now I'll tell you what my further opinion is,—that she will change her name within three months of your possessing 'The Psyche.'"

"I think she *has* a turn for marrying," said Jack, who was putting his head into the trap which his two friends had set for him, as kindly as possible, "and I don't know why she shouldn't,—she's a sensible, agreeable, creechur; and I think her little parties—at least the two nights I have been there—uncommon pleasant,—and no mistake."

As the conversation proceeded, Jack warmed, and at last they went the length of drinking the health of the future mistress of "The Psyche," accompanied with remarks and observations which settled the point, and unequivocally alluded to the individual lady; and this, and an expression of Lord Wagley's decided conviction that Jack would be a member of the Yacht Club before he was a week older, sent him to bed perfectly happy, and utterly forgetful of everything disagreeable that had passed during the last month.

This may seem strange when the nature of these occurrences is taken into calculation; but that which is stranger still, is the fact that, for once in his life, Jack was not entirely mistaken in the effect he had produced. Lady Lavinia really thought him a 'fine man.' She saw that he was not particularly learned, but she thought him vivacious and agreeable: such thoughts having gained possession of her mind, because, of the three days which had elapsed since he was first presented to her, two and a half had been devoted to her.

In the morning, Leveret and Mr. Brag had their final consultation on the subject of the yacht. They went on board: Jack poked about in every hole and corner, looked at every part of her with that sort of waggish curiosity which a monkey might be supposed to exhibit under similar circumstances. The captain, as Chipstead's skipper was called, pointed out all her perfections, and expatiated upon her sailing qualities, all of which was, as the reader may imagine, Greek to our hero; who, nevertheless, was captivated with the accommodation she possessed, and which, while she was lying in the harbour as steady and as even upon her keel as Saint Paul's Cathedral on its foundations, seemed to him straight up, right down, and no mistake.

Four men and the captain would be a capital complement for

her; and the captain, who had been five years with Lord Flipflap before he engaged with Captain Chipstead, was a treasure and a host in himself. The thing was clearly settled; a man once bitten with a fancy, has only to be cherished and encouraged a little, and he is sure to put into execution the most absurd possible project. A cat in a bowl, in the middle of a duck-pond, could not be more completely out of her element than Jack Brag in a yacht; but the conceit, the ambition, and, above all, the hope of overcoming all obstacles by rising higher than he ever yet had attempted, confirmed him in the undertaking; and having partaken of some luncheon which Lord Wagley had ordered to be prepared on board, and having drunk success to yachting several times over, he pressed his kind friend Leveret's hand, in token of the conclusion of his bargain, and was put on shore at the "Fountain," owner of "The Psyche," for which he was to give a bill at two months for eight hundred pounds,—a circumstance not of the slightest earthly importance, because, as Lord Wagley had said the night before, and the captain and the attorney had repeated in the morning, she was as good as a bank-note for that money, the great struggle about her being, who was to possess her; so that any day in the week he could dispose of her, and get abundance of thanks for sparing her.

Lord Wagley was out sailing; indeed, his lordship appeared particularly anxious not to have any personal share in making the bargain. Accordingly, Jack and the lawyer whiled away time,—first by calling at Lady Lavinia's and then climbing the hill by Northwood-Park Gate, and then, by strolling along the road towards Newpport; their conversation turning chiefly on nautical matters, upon which Mr. Leveret was very little better informed than his client. Having concluded their excursion, they strolled back again, enquired at the turnpike about some shorter road homeward, and at last found themselves once more on the Parade.

There they met Lady Lavinia and Fanny, there Jack formally announced the purchase he had made, and there received her ladyship's compliments and congratulations on the event: there too they found Mr. Selwyn, the devoted admirer of Miss Hastings, and it took but a few moments to perceive that their affection was reciprocal; but, as has already been observed, the pretensions of the young author were rigidly discountenanced by Lady Lavinia, who, having besieged and implored him into being her visitor, had become most anxious to get rid of him without the *éclat* of dismissing a lover, and above all, without souring the temper of his muse, and probably inducing something from his pen which might make her uncomfortable for the rest of her life.

A shrewed old lady long since dead, once expressed her opinion to me that, in a worldly point of view, it was much better to be feared than loved in society. That Selwyn was popular, and

even beloved, there can be no doubt, but that with all his gentleness and gaiety, he possessed the power of making "the galled jade wince," is equally true; and although it is farthest from my thoughts to hint that any such character could be justly appropriated to Lady Lavinia Newbiggen, still she felt that she *had* weak points, and had no desire that her blots should be hit by so able a master. Thus she was poised between the fear of giving him offence, and wishing most devoutly that he would take it. To carry this point she had formed a scheme, which she eventually put into execution, with what success the reader will hereafter know.

In the course of four or five days, during which Jack, who had taken a great fancy to Leveret, and took his opinion upon every point, our hero, was actually put into possession of 'The Psyche,' in consideration of his acceptance. That he was not at present to be balloted for at the Club, arose from some regulation as to the meeting of an adequate number of members, or some other reason, which Wagley most plausibly gave, his object merely being to dispose of the craft. Jack's dismay, however, when he found that the distinguished burgee which formed one of her chiefest ornaments while fluttering at her topmast head, was to be dowsed so soon as she ceased to be the property of Captain Chipstead, was great; and his nervousness when he went on board and, while looking over her sails with a nautical eye, which were bent for his inspection, felt the influence of her Pearl-like mainsail, even under the lee of the houses, was most remarkable.

Wagley had strenuously advised him to retain the captain and crew:—"couldn't do better." This advice he implicitly followed, and proceeded to endeavour to elicit from this merman and his followers, what he ought farther to do.

"It depends greatly on gentlemen's fancies, sir," said Bung, the captain: "some likes one thing, and some another. I suppose you'll take longish trips, sir? she's as fine a sea-boat as ever swam;—lies like a duck on the water." "Yes," said Jack, "Yes, I shall go out and about like the others, you know—all straight up, and right down,—and no mistake."

"What I mean is, sir," said Bung, (evidently a relation of the truly nautical Cowes family, the Corks,) "some gentlemen likes to have everything reg'lar ship-shape—just as one as if we was aboard of a man-o'-war. If you likes to have 'Psyche' kept in that manner,—all, as I calls it, slap-up,—these four men don't mind punishment:—they've got their Guernsey shirts all worked, you see, with her name upon them, as likewise upon their hats; and if she's to be handled like a king's-cutter, they don't value the 'cat' of a farden. Here, Bill, you come aft;—show the gentleman your frock."

Accordingly a regular fine-looking Vectan stepped up to Jack

and exhibited to him his hat and striped frock, whereupon were worked in the one instance, and painted in the other,—the letters PSYCHE, the which exhibition astonished Jack not a little, it being the first time he had ascertained that such was the mode of spelling Mrs. Cupid's name,—a circumstance which might have been ascertained by any more observant person than Bung, inasmuch as Mr. Brag, after looking at the object before him, repeated in a tone sufficiently audible to have attracted 'ears polite,'—"Psyche,—what the deuce does that mean?"

"I should in course," said Brag to his captain, "like to have her uncommon smart,—and all that; but I don't understand what you mean about the men not caring for the 'cat.'"

"What I mean, sir," said Bung, "is, that among the tip-toppers of our squadron, them as we call the moon-rakers, and angel-disturbers,—they keep up reg'lar navy discipline, and whenever a man gets intosticated in regard of liquor,—goes ashore without leave,—stays ashore after his leave is out, or does anything lubberly, they has him seized up to a grating, and gives him 'a couple of dozen!'"

"A couple of dozen what?" said Jack.

"Lashes, sir," said Bung.

"And do they stand it?" asked Jack.

"It's all matter of agreement in the outset," said Bung. "It's a regular understood thing in a smart craft,—five pounds a flogging;—that's the price, sir; and some of the nobs here, as is what they thinks uncommon slap-up, stumps to the tune of two or three hundred a year a-piece, to support discipline: howsomever, here, in this bit of a thing, it arn't likely we should never come to *that*; only I mention it at first, because it's always considered in the wages."

"Bit of a thing!" muttered Jack, who felt, while he was beginning to get extremely uncomfortable on the deck of his yacht, himself scarcely second to Nelson, and 'The Psyche' not at all inferior to 'The Victory.' "No,—no," said he, "I shan't want that sort of thing. I shall take it easy, and have no floggings."

"I suppose," said Bung, "you would like to get what's wanting in the way of stores aboard as soon as possible."

"Stores!" said Jack, and his mind reverted to the shop "I'd rather have moulds or wax."

"Beg pardon, sir," said Bung—"not such like as that; your servant will bring them sort of things off, I dare say. No; I've just made out a bit of a list of some of the things we shall want:—

3 casks of beef.

3 do. pork.

6 bags biscuit.

3 barrels of beer.

- 2 firkins Irish butter.
- 200 fathom of inch and a-half rope.
- 1 small anchor, three and a-half cwt.
- 80 blocks, of sizes.
- 4 small barrels superfine tar.
- 15 bolts of best canvasses.

And a few other little necessities ; such as four new oars and a mast for the boat : and then, sir, the copper is a little scraped under her counter, which will want looking after ; and some of the glasses in the skylights is damaged ; and I think, sir, it would be as well to tell the carpenter to run his eye along the bowsprit, I'm not quite sure that it isn't sprung. I've looked at it myself, and so has Jim ; but it's best to be all right. We had a jolly good bump against a lubberly West-Indiaman—pitched right into her bows—the last time the captain was out."

"Why," said Jack, rattling the few shillings which were in his pockets, as if they were the more endeared to him on account of the departure of so many of their associates, "that seems a good deal, but I suppose you know best."

"It's all necessary, sir, you may rely upon it," said Bung. "We want some slops sadly."

"What !" said Jack, "besides the beer ?"

"Beer won't keep men warm, sir," said Bung.

"Oh, no, in course," said Jack ; "when it is cold they shall have whatever they want."

"It's clothes I mean, sir," said Bung : "and about spirits, sir—will your servant sarve out—or how ?"

"Oh, yes," said Jack, "that will be best."

"Just as you please, sir," said Bung. "The captain used to send forward what was wanted, under my care :—but just as you please."

"I'll go down stairs," said Jack, "and look about me——"

"Here, Jim," cried the captain—"are you there?—the gentleman is going below."

And down he went, in a sort of mist and maze, caused by the accumulation of expense and difficulty for which he was in no way prepared, and which completely upset the wisdom of the French proverb, which says, "*Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte.*"

Jack's great object in what he called "going down stairs" was, to be left for a few minutes to his own reflections, which, however, were anything but agreeable. A yacht in the abstract was a very charming thing, and the absolute necessity of possessing one, before he could become associated club-wise with Lord Wagley and his friends, rendered it most of all desirable ; but he saw in a moment that he had quite mistaken and miscalculated the whole affair. Nor did the preparations so anxiously suggested by Bung,—involving,

as they evidently did, the possibility of lengthened excursions,—seem in the slightest degree more agreeable to his imagination. Bung, however, followed him below, and made sundry remarks upon the hinges of a door which wanted mending, and the handles of some drawers which required altering; nor did he leave him until Brag, resolved to enjoy the privilege of command for which he had paid, or was to pay, so dearly, dismissed him, and abandoned himself to the enjoyment of just as much motion, produced by the displayed mainsail, as made his head ache, without his exactly finding out why, and the delights of the fragrance of the best possible pitch and tar with which certain seams in the neighbourhood of the cabin had been recently payed.

Jack threw himself upon his crimson moreen cushions, and voted himself a rash enterprising hero; but as the yacht would always fetch her price, and as Lady Lavinia had really—for so it was—made an unequivocal demonstration of regard for him, in which very curious prepossession she was mightily encouraged by Lord Wagley, and even by Fanny Hastings, who looked to anything like a matrimonial engagement for her aunt as a certain precursor of her own union with her talented, not rich, lover, the literary man;—he considered himself, under the peculiar circumstances in which he had contrived to place himself, fully justified in making his present experiment.

As the new owner of “The Psyche” was casting his eyes around the close-smelling box in which he was revelling, they suddenly rested upon a book. Jack was no great reader, but his anxiety was awakened to know what work it could be that had been left in his possession: he poked across the cabin, and secured the treasure, and found it to be the Code of Signals belonging to the Club—or squadron, as it has since been called—of which he was so anxious to become a member. Jack, who was cunning enough to know that he could not use these signals until he had received the accolade, thought it nevertheless a great objet to secure the book, so as to inform himself of what was going on when the squadron was telegraphing; accordingly he resolved upon making extracts into his own pocket-book, leaving the inestimable treasure itself untouched; and accordingly he began without loss of time to transcribe, at random, such as he thought most interesting.

No.

208. “Send some cutlets on board.”

Do. (With a gun.)—“And potatoes.”

211. “The last snuff is not good.”

214. “Send Hawkesly’s mixture.”

506. “Lemons.”

507. “Punishment.”

No

692. "The enemy is in sight."

693. "Get dinner at ——"

(Followed by numeral for hour.)

1264. "Tarts from Southampton."

—— (With two balls from the Club-house post.)—"Cham-pagne."

(Numeral for bottles.)

1271. "How d'ye do?"

1272. "Pretty well, I thank you."

Do. (With a gun.)—"How are you?"

1308. "Ladies are sick; send off large boat."

1309. "Aye, aye!"

NIGHT SIGNALS.

Two guns, and a light at gaff. "We are are becalmed."

A blue light, and three guns in }
quick succession through the } "Dear me!—you don't say so?"
Club-house rails.

One gun, and two lights at top- }
mast head. } "Don't wait dinner; we can't get
back."

One gun, and a rocket from }
Club-house. } "We don't mean it."

One gun, and two rockets. }
"Send off boat-cloaks, and um-
brellas."

One gun through club-house }
rails. } "Aye, aye!"

Jack had scarcely made these few interesting and important extracts before he heard his captain coming, what he called, "down stairs." He threw down the mystic volume, huddled his memoranda into his pocket, and feigned sleep—

———"the certain knot of peace;
The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe;
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release;
Th' indifferent judge between the high and low"—

in order to impress Bung with an idea of the perfect at-home-ishness which he felt in his *own* yacht.

Bung came to announce that the boat was alongside, and to enquire whether he would like to go ashore; to which the newly-installed lord and master of the barque replied in the affirmative, gladly seizing the proffered opportunity of releasing himself from the growing qualmishness which oppressed him, not of himself having ascertained what specific instructions he was required to give, or what special order to make, in order to procure his transportation to *terra firma*.

As Jack stepped over the side, which he did with considerable

apprehension, and just as he had bumped himself, first on the gun-wale, secondly on one of the thwarts, and thirdly and lastly into the stern-sheets of the boat, Bung enquired whether he was to order the few little items which he had mentioned as being essentially necessary to the nautical existence of "The Psyche," and received from Brag his full authority to do so,—inasmuch as, if they could not be done without, what was to be done but have them. The splendid manner in which these instructions were given, struck awe and gratitude into the hearts and minds of the two pullers, who touched their hats as Jack stepped on shore, "just all as one" as if he had been an admiral: Jack, however, felt a pang in the midst of all this elevation. They pulled to the landing-place by the flag-staff at the end of the Parade, farthest from the Castle, instead of to the sloping *chaussée* close to it,—that being sacred to the use of the members of the Club.

This little drawback, however, would be got over in a few days, and Jack looked forward to the assumption of the uniform, which he had ordered three days before, as a matter of certainty; and with this prospect before him, leading as it did to the accomplishment of his great project with regard to Lady Lavinia, he plunged at once into the expenses and extravagances which appeared likely in the end to work his destruction. Jack, however, possessed a certain degree of that sort of self-preservative prudence which closely resembled cunning; and while he was playing this game, living upon the means he still possessed, and purchasing, upon the credit of his acceptances, property which he was made to believe would fetch its price after it had served his turn, he came to a resolution not upon any account to trench upon the three hundred pounds which Salmon had paid into his banker's; he having ascertained the fact of such payment having been made, by a letter of enquiry upon the subject addressed to the firm.

At this juncture, and while Jack is waiting to get Psyche in order, —and while Selwyn, the gentle and the witty, is urging his suit with Fanny Hastings,—and Lord Wagley is preparing to soften Jack's fall with respect to the Club, the reader may not dislike to know the result of the "journey to London," effected by the Thespians and Salmons on the day of Jack's hurried departure from Lewes.

As they proceeded, the gloom and sullenness of the bride did by no means abate; neither did Mr. Salmon's apprehensions with regard to a collision between the lady *within*, and the lady *without*, in any degree subside, inasmuch as the only subject upon which his wife spoke with anything like common sociability was that of the mutton-chops at Godstone.

The Fates, however, seemed to frown even more severely than the fair; for before they had reached East Grinstead, the sky, erst blue and beautiful, was suddenly overcast with heavy clouds, which

in a very short time evinced the strongest disposition to "pour down hail:" the wind rose, and blowing strong from the northward, drifted the heavy torrent right in their teeth, and in a very short time drenched Titsy, J. S. and every other object, animate or inanimate, which was exposed to its influence on the uttermost side of the coach.

That these copious tributes had a tendency to cool the bride's temper, or wash from the tablets of her mind the sorrows and the sense of injury with which they were so fatally inscribed, the reader cannot imagine: on the contrary, as each succeeding fold of her ample drapery became susceptible of the moisture, she became proportionably more irritable. The philosophers tell us that water thrown on fire gives it additional power, and, sure enough, by the time they *did* reach East Grinstead she was in a state of excitement hardly to be described.

Jem thought, in his own mind, that this would be a good opportunity to persuade her, as Falstaff says to Bardolph, to "lay out," and descending from her exaltation, order a "pochay" to town: but he did not dare to make the proposition, because Titsy suggested to *him* that, as there were only two men inside besides the ladies,—little did she think who they were,—there could be no doubt that one of them, "specially the little one, for he was so genteel," would offer to give up his seat to *her*. The bare possibility of such a thing put Salmon into a fever; not that his wife's eye, unaccustomed to the rougeing, powdering, lip-salving, eye-browing, and all concomitant stage tricks, was likely to recognise as the lovely bright-eyed Desdemona of the preceding evening, the sallow little woman who, unlaced, unplaited, unpainted, and packed up for travelling, in a plaid cloak, and huge shawl, looked as unlike either what Mrs. Salmon had seen in the street of Lewes, or on the stage of the theatre, as—no matter what—the simile is difficult,—the parallel might be dangerous.

While the horses were being changed, neither of the gentlemen "insides" got out: nor did they evince either pity or compassion for the saturated sufferer, who was not backward in reminding them of her presence by stamping with her foot on the boot in order to keep up the circulation, producing a noise which must have sensibly reminded them of the evidences of impatience so frequently afforded by the gods in the galleries.

The weather cleared a little as they proceeded; but the gleams of sunshine, like those of hope to other sufferers, were but transient, and before they actually reached Godstone it had resumed its wonted severity. It was here that Salmon felt determined to assume the command, and hire a 'pochay,' as he called it; and when the coach drove up to the door, before his better half had even commenced her descent, he enquired if such a thing could be had:

the answer was in the negative, all their horses were out, and no less than two parties were staying in the house from their inability to forward them.

This discussion, however, was overhead by Mr. Teeardeyell and his shadow, who nearly annihilated Salmon by telling him that they were about to leave the coach there, in order to go across to a friend's house near Reigate, where they were expected at dinner, and that therefore their two places would be quite at his service and that of the lady.

To use Mr. Salmon's own description of his feelings at hearing this announcement, you might have knocked him down with a feather. His wife and Molly Hogg in the same coach,—two fighting-cocks in a sack could not prove more formidable companions: however, there was no help for it; and accordingly Salmon handed his precious charge into the parlour, where the long desired chops; and "something hot," were on the instant produced, in order to assuage the angered feelings of the gentle Titty.

To Salmon's great joy, neither of the ladies in the coach got out; they fell to, upon their well flattened sandwiches, and were assisted in their dirt-devouring pursuit by their companions, who stood at the door and partook of the bounty of *la belle Marie*. For the benefit of the house, they borrowed a tumbler of the waiter, one of the gentlemen drank a little water, and the other lighted his cigar by the kitchen fire. While all this was going on, and Mr. and Mrs. Salmon were regaling, Jem's eyes, were constantly fixed on the coach; and, as he saw his wife replenishing her glass with strong ale, he felt his heart sink from apprehension of the result.

"You don't eat, Mr. S." said the lady: "left your appetite behind you, I suppose,—in the playhouse, most likely?"

"I do eat" said Salmon.

"Not as you did coming down," replied the lady. "Them as is in love never eats."

This by the way of prelude to the performance was complete; and when the coachman put his head into the room, with the usual "Now, sir, if you please," the summons sounded worse in Mr. Salmon's ears, than the Clown's invitation to Bernardine to come down and be hanged; he fidgetted, and shuffled. "If," thought he, "I could say one word by way of preparation to Miss H. not to mind her,—not to speak; but how can I? what is to be done?" the waiter came into the room to be paid, else he would have feigned going out to pay him. "Come, sir, if you please," was repeated; when, just as they were obeying the second appeal, Mr. Teeardeyell looked in and said, "Come, sir, you are keeping the stage waiting;" at the same moment holding up his finger so as to attract Salmon's attention.

"Dropped one of my gloves," said Salmon, turning back to at-

fect to look for it. This *ruse* succeeded. Teeardeyell seized the moment, "All 's right inside,—no fear,—there 's nobody in the coach whom *you* know, and remember you know nobody."

This mysterious counsel was evidently well meant, and was accordingly received with a look of gratitude. Fortified by this, Salmon saw with comparative satisfaction the waiter and chambermaid assisting to squeeze his wife into the coach; and soon as that important operation was performed, he stepped in after her.

"Please ma'am," said Mrs. Salmon to her *vis-à-vis*, "will it be agreeable for you just to put your other leg outsided o'mine? Thank ye, ma'am;—shocking bad day. I'm all in a muck, just as if I had been sitting in a washing-tub the whole of the morning."

Jem did not hear much of this, so completely was he astounded with what he saw. Mrs. Hogg sat opposite to Mrs. Salmon. According to Mr. Teeardeyell's direction, he took no notice of *her*, nor did she acknowledge *him*; and, as Mrs. Salmon had never seen her, all went well: but opposite to Jem sat a little crumped-up woman, apparently sixty, wearing a pair of green glasses, who was speedily-described by Mrs Hogg as a French lady "just landed at Brighton from Dieppe, who had come on a visit to her, who had never been in England before, and spoke no English; which," continued the matron, "is very awkward, because I *speak no* French; so I am taking her to London, to a brother of mine, where the whole family-are excellent French scholars, and she will be quite comfortable."

Salmon had seen Miss Hogg get int othe coach with her mamma, and her mamma was there still, and nobody in the shape of woman had left the carriage during their journey; but so plausibly did the exemplary lady tell the history of the Frenchwoman, and so perfectly did his opposite neighbour look the part, that James was perfectly puzzled: nor would he have been satisfied of the beauty of the fiction and the skill of Miss H., if he had not been made aware of her identity by one or two of those little nudges which are sometimes given and received by travellers, in what are called public conveyances, in the most private manner. He was soon satisfied that Mary *was* there, and acting as well as ever she did in her life.

Nothing occurred to mar the serenity of the journey; indeed, Mrs. Salmon, overpowered by the "heavy wet" which she had taken within and without, sank into an agreeable slumber, which afforded her affectionate husband an opportunity of entering into a whispered explanation of his regrets and agony at what had taken place, which was gradually warming into an agreeable interchange of soft things, when he was all at once checked in his eloquence by Mrs. Hogg's saying "Fox," in the loudest tone and with marked emphasis, meaning thereby to convey to her friends in one of the

shortest possible monosyllables her suspicion that Mrs. Salmon was not quite so fast asleep as she pretended to be.

Her apprehensions, however, were ill-founded; nor did she awake from her repose, except for a few moments while they were changing the horses at Croydon, until, having arrived at the "Elephant and Castle," it became necessary that the *companions* should separate,—Mr. and Mrs. Salmon going by the "City Branch," and the ladies proceeding in the coach to what is called, by the truly elegant, the "West End." Here the affair had determined happily, the scheme had succeeded, and stratagem was triumphant: but such was the *espèglerie* of Miss Hogg, and such her unwillingness either that her own skill in disguises should go unnoticed or that Salmon should, as they say, "get off altogether" from the punishment due to his infidelity to *her* in marrying without even so much as apprising her of his intention, that just as the parties had divided, and as the coaches were driving off in different directions, the young lady whipped off her green spectacles, and, popping her head out of the window, said, "Good day, Mrs. S. ! when you go to the play next, I hope you'll contrive to behave better."

This was "letting slip the dogs of war" with a vengeance: these words opened worlds of deception and dissimulation to Mrs. Salmon's wondering mind. She now saw that she had been duped and deceived intentionally, and her husband was in the plot; all his protestations that what had been done, was done for the best, that it would have been most shocking to have had anything like a quarrel in the coach, and so on, were wholly unavailing in the way of soothing her: she was implacable; nor was Salmon himself less irate with the Thespian, who certainly had sacrificed to vanity and jealousy the peace and tranquillity of a couple which she at first had unintentionally disturbed.

What the ultimate results of this travelling masquerade were, the reader may yet live to hear.

CHAPTER XX.

IN about ten days from the date of his purchase, and not before, Brag was informed by his captain, Bung, that "The Psyche" was "ready for sea;" the aforesaid Bung, being an exception to the general rule of nautical honesty and fair-dealing, having successfully persuaded Jack into the absolute necessity of stocking and victualling her, as if she were going to make a fresh voyage to the Pole, in order to discover that there is nothing to find out.

It was curious enough to see the boaster caught in his own snare: his last step had compelled him really to do all, or most of the

things about which he had, through the previous years of his life, only talked; there was really the yacht,—the captain and crew were really there,—really there was his own man, (butler and valet;) there were really all the essentials for luncheon, and its consequences; and there was Lady Lavinia doing the honours, and issuing her invitations to make up the party for the first cruise; those to whom she sent her missives being too glad to get afloat, even with her ladyship.

Brag liked it very much; it seemed somehow that he was beginning to realize all his visions; but as there are drawbacks to all pleasures, so in *his* case there occurred one, which at first appeared insurmountable. Jack went on board about twelve o'clock. It was a fine fresh day, and everything looked propitious for a trip.

When he got on the deck of "The Psyche," the mainsail, which had been shaken out, began to flap and flutter, and Jack surveyed it with an awe not to be described: he looked ahead, and saw one or two yachts plunging head foremost into the rising billows, and riding over their curling heads in a manner which filled him with the most terrible apprehensions.

"It blows uncommon hard, Bung," said Jack.

"Nice breeze as ever was, sir," said the captain.

"Those vessels out there, are bobbing up and down a good deal;—a'n't they?" said Jack.

"Pitches a few, sir," said Bung. "When we gets further out, the swell will be longer. We may, perhaps, get a bit of a twister off Spithead, if it holds as it does now: but Psyche's an uncommon dry boat."

Into the fair-weather mind of Brag, the idea of her ever being wet, had never yet entered.

"Oh!" said Brag, "a dry boat and no mistake."

"Not a bit o' one, sir," said Bung. "She was a little crank last year: but I've got a ton or two more ballast just a-midships, which, as I calculate, makes her all right."

"Umph!" said Brag, who kept his eyes fixed upon the boom, which gave evident signs of liveliness, as the wind took the sail.

"The ladies are coming aboard, sir," said Hickman, Jack's new servant,—“quite a treasure,” who had lived with Captain Chipstead as long as that gallant officer could contrive to keep him, and who was, therefore, a perfect master of his art in his present capacity.

"Are they?" said Jack. "What a lot!"

Accordingly, the boat containing these fair creatures, pulled alongside; and Jack, standing at the gangway, handed on to the deck of his yacht, Lady Lavinia Newbiggen, Miss Hastings, Lady and Miss Wattle, Captain Hazledy,—a sort of lover of the latter, Miss Lumsden, intimate associate of Miss Hastings, and Dr. Munx,

Lady Olivia's physician in ordinary ; not one of which amiable and respectable individuals, with the exception of Lady Lavinia and her niece, were in any very particular degree known to Jack, and not one of them caring whether he were hanged or not, the next day, their object being, to carry on their respective flirtations, enjoy the cruise, and satisfy the appetite it most probably would create, by the demolition of his luncheon.

Selwyn was too good a dramatist not to have conceived a sort of under plot, in which he was himself to perform the principal part. Scarcely had the first detachment of *Houris* set their feet on board, before Selwyn and his friend Mr. Buckthorne, whom he brought with him, in order to make his own appearance nothing particular, were at the side.

"Oh, Mr. Selwyn," said Lady Lavinia, "I didn't know 'we were to have the pleasure of your society."

"I asked *him* to come," said Jack ; "all right and no mistake."

The emphasis which Jack so studiously placed upon the monosyllable "*him*," tended in some degree to enlighten her ladyship as to his notions of the free-and-easy style in which she introduced her, by *him*, uninvited party ; however, there they were. Bung came up to Jack, and enquired if he expected any more company.

"Pon my life! I don't know," said Jack, for once quite out of his element ;—"does anybody know if anybody else is coming?"

A dead silence succeeded to the question.

"Shall we cast off from the buoy, sir?" said Bung.

"What boy?" said Jack ; "I don't expect no boys."

Whereupon his guests laughed a little.

"I mean, sir," said the captain, touching the rim of his hat, "are you ready to start?"

"Oh! yes," said Brag, getting rather soured at finding that nobody paid the slightest attention to anything he said. "I'm ready ;—only mind the wind."

"Forward there," cried Bung,—and no sooner were the words out of his mouth than Hickman jumped up the companion and cried, "Bung, Bung!—hold hard :—the ice and the pines isn't come aboard ; nor not one of the perigoos (as he pronounced it.) I say, make the signal 1906 for the ice ; 2014 for the pines—numeral four, and blue-pierced white, at the gaff, with a gun, for the perigoos :—I can't sail without the perigoos."

"Oh! no," said Jack, not knowing what on earth or water it meant—"we can't go without the perigoose, for fear of accidents ; I won't go out to sea without the perrigoose."

"What's the use," said Bung to Hickman, "o' you talking to me of making signals?—it's as much as my life's worth. Mr. Brag isn't a member of the squadron : how can I use them 'ere signals? If I did, the yachtmen, as sure as we stand here, would load them

'ere carronades which poke their noses out of the iron railings in front of the '*Clubbus*,' and blow us to hattoms."

"Don't do that, captain," said Jack; "anything reasonable I don't mind. If the perrigoose is absolutely necessary, have it aboard; but not tricking—no affront to the squadron—no: all straight up, right down, and no mistake."

"Why, sir," said Hickman in a whisper to Jack, "there's more come aboard than you told me of; and if you haven't something more in the way of provisions, they'll be all out of sorts."

"Out of sorts!" said Jack—"not if they are like me the other day when I came over here: they'll be a deuced sight more out of sorts the more they eat—eh?—right down, straight up, and no mistake."

"Why, sir," said Hickman in the same subdued tone, "I have been at this work with the captain now three or four years—that is, you know, sir, as long as he could stand it,—and I know the whole—what I call the whole scale and bearing of this sort of thing. They all hate the sea as much as I, and, begging your pardon, *you* do; but it's a something to do: and then the young gentlemen and the young ladies, like it; and the old ones like it—but they like the consolations below, sir,—the luncheon—all that, rely upon it. You'll forgive me, sir; if you want the thing to go off well, you'll make Bung hoist 1906—2014, and hoist blue-peter at the gaff, with a gun."

"Hoist Peter where?" said Jack.

"At the gaff, sir," said Hickman, "where we generally run up the ensign."

Jack's small mind was now so entirely overloaded with ices, pines, and perrigoose, (unknown to him by that name,) that he saw in his servant's proposition about the signal, nothing but an option between hanging an ensign in the army, or Blue Peter, whom he had established in his mind as being one of his crew, so nicknamed by his shipmates.

It is notorious that servants *will* have their way, and Psyche was not suffered to get way upon her, until, in defiance of signal-making, Mr. Hickman had sent ashore for his ices, his pines, and his perigeux pies, which duly arrived in half an hour, much to the surprise of Jack, who did not know a French *paté* by that name. Hickman enjoyed exceedingly the innocence of his master; and having been, as Jack would have said, "put up" to the necessity of having an increase of provisions by the strangers,—who had a much greater influence over Hickman than Jack himself had, from having been friends of Captain Chipstead—he resolved upon having a strong reinforcement of *comestibles*, *coûte qui coûte*.

At last, everything being ready, Bung gave the word to cast off—"Haul taut the sheet;" and away ran "The Psyche" out of the harbour like an arrow from a bow.

"To the Nab? sir," said Bung to Brag.

"Oh! in course,—Oh, yes, go to the Nab," said Jack.

She rounded out beautifully. The ladies were in ecstasies; nothing could be more charming. Clear of the harbour, she began to feel the breeze.

"You'll take the helm, sir, won't you?" said Bung to Brag.

"No," said Jack, "no—nothing, thank you, before luncheon."

"Stand by there," "Aye, aye, sir"—"About she goes!" Flap—slap went the mainsail: shiver—shake—round went the boom: off went Jack's hat—he hadn't yet hoisted a cap: splash came a sea—whisked over her bows: the ladies laughed. Bung cried—"Steady now:—there, there—that'll do. Belay there, Jim. On with that hatch. Clear away there. Mind your eye, Jack."

And then Psyche began to pitch and knock up the spray, much to the surprise of her sporting owner, who was however speedily released from the embarrassment of being unhatted by the provident Hickman, who brought him up a cap, such as he ought to have worn at starting.

"Delightful breeze!" said Mr. Buckthorne to Jack, who was holding on, like grim-Death, by the companion, looking in the face as white as a sheet.

"Very nice indeed," said Jack.

Dash came another bright silvery spray over her bows, which flew on high, and sparkled in the sun like a dancing rainbow.

"Oh, my!" said Jack, "that's uncommon severe, eh!—and no mistake."

"Lord love you, sir!" said Bung, "she's like a duck in the water. Here's a stiff'un coming, see how she'll rise to that."

And, sure enough, a great white horse came foaming and splashing along, and over it she went! Glorious confirmation of her duck-like qualities.

"By Job!" said Jack, holding on, "we are well out of that."

"Bung," cried the doctor, "here comes a twister."

And before the words were out of his mouth, a good toppling wave struck her nearly a-midships—Bung giving the doctor, who had been a constant companion of Chipstead in his voyages, one of those cunning looks which are perfectly understood amongst the initiated, as he gave Psyche a "yaw," up into the wind, in order to make the beautiful pneumatic exhibition which followed, for the benefit of her new owner.

This, however, was more than Jack could stand, and after this shake he made a rapid disappearance. He descended to the cabin, not however half so much affected by the mere physical effects of the motion as by his moral apprehension that nothing short of a miracle could save them from perdition.

Upon the next tack they ran away beautifully—not to poor Brag's

eyes, who having thrown himself horizontally upon one of the well-stuffed sofas in his cabin. and having made himself rather better, thought that nothing ever could restore "Psyche" to the gentle upright position in which she rode so easily when he bought her : and what added to his misery was, hearing the mirthful conversation of his unknown guests, none of whom had left the deck. or abandoned the delights of participating in the pleasures of the day.

Just as Jack was getting what he called a little easy and comfortable—barring his constant apprehensions of some dreadful calamity,—his ears were assailed by Lady Lavinia's voice, calling upon him loudly and repeatedly, to know when they were to have luncheon. He could not disobey the summons of the noble Orlebar with whom he sought an alliance, and he therefore roused himself. Hickman advised him to bathe his temples with cold water, and drink brandy; both of which he did;—a mode of taking brandy and water which a particular friend of his would have pronounced the very best mode of administering the beverage. However, Jack was completely beaten, and it was with the greatest difficulty Hickman could get him to sit right up, and no mistake! while, by his command, he summoned the guests to their repast.

It is not an agreeable subject to dwell upon, but as the mishap affords a new illustration of Jack's absurdities—only imagine a man having been dreadfully, and being still considerably, sick. oppressed and agitated by a certain quantum of alarm, and labouring moreover under the influence of an unsavoury smell of pitch, moreen-damask, savoury viands, and fresh paint, having to preside at a table which was dancing the hays, and help a squashy French pie, made by a Cowes confectioner. In addition to this, Jack had to behold the destruction of flocks of fowls, hams, tongues, and sundry more delicate things, by people whom he had never seen before, and who were, unluckily for him, what are called good sailors.

Things went on pretty well; Lady Lavinia encouraged him,—for she really liked him; pop went the champagne corks—(splash came a sea down the companion):—more fowls; more *moussu*—more seas:—and it was pleasant to observe how careful Captain Hazleby was of Miss Wattla, who could hardly keep her seat in her chair without his assistance Selwyn too, who in the confusion of the moment had contrived to get near Miss Hastings, was equally attentive to her; while Dr. Munx, a great favourite with Lady Lavinia, kept prescribing repeated draughts of Jack's champagne, which her ladyship kept swallowing, weeping a little as the day wore on, and saying to herself, audibly enough to be heard by Jack—"How my poor dear Henry would have liked such a day as this!"

The beauty of the day, however, began to fade away; the bright sky was overcast with clouds, and a meteorological contest took

place between the wind and the rain. It became impossible for the ladies to return to the deck, and indispensably necessary to shut the cabin skylights. This was extremely agreeable to Jack, whose health, under existing circumstances, required the admission of a very considerable quantity of oxygen, and who, when the cucumber-frame was put over what he called the square hole in the floor, felt as one may suppose a sparrow feels, under the receiver of an air-pump during the process of exhaustion.

"The wind has all died away," said Mr. Buckthorne, when he returned from the deck. "Here we are, off St. Helen's, and, as Bung says, when we shall get away nobody can tell."

"But what are we to do?" said Jack, to whom every novelty of circumstance presented some new peril.

"Stay where we are, I presume," said Dr. Munx.

This produced a laugh. Dr. Munx was pleased, and called for some more champagne.

Psyche began to roll a little, and her wet mainsail to flap heavily.

"What the deuce is that noise?" said Jack.

"The mainsail flapping," said Buckthorne.

"Why do they let it flap?" said Jack.

"Because," said the facetious Munx, "they can't help it."

Another laugh.

"Well then, I suppose it's all right," said Jack, "and no mistake:—but a'n't we rolling about a good deal?"

"That's because there's no wind; the rain has beaten it dead hollow," said Buckthorne.

This last reason killed the last of Jack's hopes. When he found his light and lively yacht spanking and splashing through the water—pitching into one wave and rising over the next—he felt himself dreadfully unwell. Hickman, his servant and councillor, then observed that it *did* blow fresh, and that there *was* a good deal of sea on, upon which Jack took to praying that the wind would, what he called, "go down," and make Psyche easier. His petition to Æolus, it seems, had been heard, and the breeze had subsided into a calm; and now, when the great object of all his wishes was actually obtained, Psyche was ten times more uneasy than she was before.

The state of affairs was very considerably changed by the change of weather: the ladies ceased smiling; Lady Lavinia felt drowsy; the men kept peeping and peering up the companion. The heavy tread of the crew upon the wet deck, and their muttered conversations, combined to excite the most melancholy feelings in Jack's mind, whose amiable assurance was so greatly weakened by the state of his health, that he could not rally and stand up against the off-hand replies and retorts, "not always courteous," of the doctor.

"Hickman," said Mr. Buckthorne to the servant, "have you got any cards on board?"

"I believe there are two or three packs, sir," replied Hickman.

"Well," muttered Jack to himself, "I think he might as well have asked *me* that question."

"We may have a little *Ecarté*," said Captain Hazleby.—(These words conjured up in Jack's mental eye the vision of Stiffkey and the I. O. U.)—"Lady Lavinia, what say you to a hand?"

"I don't think I can see the cards," said her ladyship, alluding to the darkness of the day.

"I should wonder if you could," thought Jack, "after drinking all that champagne."

"Oh! don't play cards," said Munx. "How long shall we be getting back?"

"Bung says," replied Buckthorne, "we shall never get back, if a breeze doesn't spring up. There's no chance of *that*, while the rain holds; and even if it *should* come to blow a little, the wind will be right in our teeth, so we shall have to beat up."

"Well but," said Jack, "can't we get out, and go ashore, and walk home!"

This produced a general roar, which roused Lady Lavinia from her serene slumber; and for her ladyship's benefit the question was repeated by Dr. Munx in his happiest style.

"Oh," said her ladyship, "you are so droll!—this is the sort of thing he is continually saying.—It quite kills me."

"No," said Buckthorne—"as matters look now, the chances are we shall sleep on board: at all events we sha'n't get back till ten or eleven."

"That's a bore," said Hazleby. "I'm engaged to a most agreeable dinner at seven."

"And we," said Miss Wattle, "are going to Lady Thunderum's ball."

"Oh! so am I," said Buckthorne, "and all of us, I conclude; but we can't command the elements."

"Have you nothing new to give us, Mr. Selwyn, in the literary way?" asked Miss Lumsden, who knew she could not better please her friend Fanny than by bringing her lover forward.

"Oh! do—do—pray, do! Read us something, Mr. Selwyn, or recite," said Munx; "anything by way of amusement."

"I have got my last poem in my pocket, by mere chance," said Selwyn. "I have often promised Lady Lavinia to read it; this, I think, would be a good opportunity."

"Oh, dear!" said Munx.

"What say you, Lady Lavinia?" said Lady Wattle,— "They say you are sovereign here."

"Our great captain's captain," said Munx.

"Why," exclaimed Jack, "that's out of Othello."

"In it, if you please," said Munx.

The very recollection of Othello, coupled with the dread that Dr. Munx might have last seen it at Lewes, threw poor Jack into a fresh confusion.

"Oh! yes," said Lady Lavinia, "as Mr. Selwyn is here, he may as well make himself agreeable, if he can."

"Aunt!" said Fanny, in a soft but reproachful tone.

"I shall be too happy," said Selwyn, producing from his pocket the manuscript, which, having had some experience of the uncertainty of yacht voyages, he had brought with him, in the hopes of obtaining an opinion of such acknowledged judges of literary merit as Lady Lavinia and Dr. Munx.

Selwyn accordingly moved himself out of the corner in which he had been sitting, and poking across the cabin at an angle of forty-five degrees, caught hold of a dancing chair, and placing it at the bottom of the table, seated himself, and began his last pet favourite work.

"Lady Lavinia," said Dr. Munx, "I do *not* think you are well. Sudden changes come over your countenance—affected by the motion; clouds swimming before your eyes—giddiness in your head?"

"Exactly so," said her ladyship.

"I must take you under my care, Lady Lavinia," said the doctor. "Put you through a three years' course of my infinitesimal medicines, which will enable me to form a just estimate of your ladyship's constitution."

"Isn't that rather a long time to wait?" said Hazleby.

"No," said Munx, "the new school have determined to do nothing in a hurry. The human frame and constitution are much too delicate to be handled so roughly as the present race of physicians handle them. In fact, we have discovered that all medicines are injurious that are visibly effective, and that unless administered after the new fashion, they eventually increase the complaints for which they are given; hence we argue (and our success has been established), that it is better to do nothing than do mischief."

"There I quite agree with the doctor," said Lady Wattle.

"When I say, nothing," said Munx, "I speak, of course, comparatively. Our system, in fact, is composed of a combination of what, to the vulgar, appear most ridiculous contradictions: for instance, a great deal of poison kills a man,—*ergo*, a little poison will do him good;—therefore we take care to give him sufficient poison to produce a disorder which we know we can cure, in order to prevent his having some other disorder which we equally well know we cannot."

"Yes but, Doctor," said Hazleby, "the delicacy of your proceedings in the poison line is very striking. My sister-in-law called in

one of your school, unknown to the family physician, and after pecking at the pin's-head pills of the new school for a month she got ashamed of her duplicity, told Doctor Fang the whole history of her defection, and quackery, and showed him a box containing materials for working out the new and infallible system which were to last her for a twelvemonth, expressing to him at the same time the mingled dread and veneration with which the magical remedies inspired her. Fang smiled, and taking the box, emptied its contents into his hands, and swallowed the whole of them at one gulp before the face of his recreant patient, to her infinite horror and astonishment."

"That is more than anything you could possibly have said, confirmatory of the safety of our principles," said Munx. "Our success I tell you does not depend upon the application of a remedy homœopathically, so much as upon the minuteness of the dose; the effects of which are the greater as it approaches the finite bounds of dilution."

"I perceive," said Buckthorne, "that the Poor-law Commissioners have regulated their proceedings upon precisely the same system. According to their *dictum*,—'The less a man eats and drinks the fatter and stronger he gets. Minute medicaments, in the shape of half-ounces of Dutch cheese and half-pints of water, 'approaching as near as possible, the finite bounds of dilution,' are most judiciously substituted for the vulgar beef and beer which Allopathic asses of other days administered to the old and weak and infirm, in the hope of nourishing age, and strengthening infirmity."

"Quite right, quite right," exclaimed the Doctor. "The Allopathic system exactly defined.—The gross masses of beef, the lengthened potations of beer, exactly correspond with the powerful remedies hitherto prescribed, which, we have now so satisfactorily ascertained, produce of themselves, symptoms which did not characterize the original malady."

"I agree with you there," said Buckthorne. "The original symptoms were hunger and thirst, the beef and beer overcame those, and replaced them by very different ones."

"The whole thing resolves itself into this one principle," said Munx,—"*minuteness of application.*"

"Why," said Hazleby, "your practice reminds me of the Duke of Buckingham—reading '*power*' for '*love*.' You say,—

'Your power is great because it is so small,'

to which I add, like his Grace,—

'Then were it greatest were it none at all!'

"What," said Lady Lavinia, "do you call a minute application?"

"Why," said Munx, "it is difficult to explain to your ladyship.

The only admissible vehicles for homœopathic medicine are amadine, the saccharine basis of milk, and alcohol reduced to a certain specific gravity at 60° of Fahrenheit."

"What a lovely name for a medicine," said Lady Wattle. "Amadine!—I think if I had a daughter born now, I would christen her Amadine."

"Why," said Munx, "that—I—the word is a good word,—it is classical and euphonious, but the material;—the English,—the vulgar name of the article it designates,—is starch."

Here a laugh, at the expense of her ladyship, gave poor Fanny hopes that the subject would drop, and that Selwyn, who had been now for some time seated, book in hand, ready to begin his poem, would have an opportunity of delighting their ears with his mellifluous voice.

Starch, sugar of milk, and spirits of wine, and water," said Munx, "are the vehicles. The medicines must be made in a laboratory sheltered from the sun's rays, yet so ventilated as not to be liable to the odious odours which so dangerously distinguish the atmosphere of an apothecary's shop: the scales to weigh them must be so sensitively delicate, as to turn with the hundredth part of a grain, and the largest vessel in the laboratory need only be a minimum measure graduated to a hundred drops."

"You should send to Lilliput, Doctor, to get practitioners," said Hazleby. "I wish Swift were alive, to give us a history of your proceedings."

"The race is not always to the Swift," said Munx, facetiously. "Our principle is admirable: we administer nothing but dried vegetables, or imperceptible minerals. Only look at our tinctures; when it comes to that, we get our extracts, mix them with spirits of wine, and stop them up in little bottles. What do we do with those tinctures—make them by taking out of our little bottles little bits of our invaluable mass—half the size of a poppy seed—add alcohol in the proportion of twenty minims to one grain of the mash; let it stand in a warm room, let the pellucid liquor drop out of it,—keep it. That's the secret for tinctures."

"Ah!" said Jack, who thought it was absolutely necessary in his own yacht to say something, "that's it,—eh? straight up, right down, and no mistake."

"Then for regulating their modifications," said Munx: "eleven grains of sugar of milk, diligently triturated for an hour with one of the medicament, whatever it is, added again, to eleven grains of sugar of milk, and triturated for another hour, produces another degree of attenuation; while one hundred drops of gin and water—we call it alcohol—Hodges, Booth, or spirits of wine, as circumstances require, mingled with a grain of the medicament;—ninety-nine minims to one of the combination—expands the quality of the

medicament another degree, and so on for every subsequent dilution. The degrees of expansion and attenuation are regularly adapted to the disease and constitution of the patient."

"Well," said Buckthorne "it is something to know that you pretend to pay so much attention to circumstances as that."

"The table of expansions is a very curious and scientific paper," said Munx. "The degrees run thus,—the highest point to which the calculation is carried being one grain.

1. First <i>deg. of expansion</i>	A hundredth part.
2. Second.	Ten-thousandth.
I. Third	A millionth.
II. Sixth	Billionth.
III. Ninth	Trillionth.
IV. Twelfth	Quadrillionth.
V. Fifteenth	Quintillionth.
VI. Eighteenth	Sextillionth.
VII. Twenty-first	Septillionth.
VIII. Twenty-fourth	Octillionth.
IX. Twenty-seventh	Nonillionth.
X. Thirtieth	Decillionth.

And then for the intervening expansions we stick certain dots and scribbles on the little bottles, which are perfectly intelligible to the initiated."

"I declare, Lady Lavinia," said Lady Wattle, "I never heard anything so satisfactory in my life: one grain of predicament, no bigger than a poppy-seed, to be expanded to a decillionth. What elasticity it must give to the system."

"Elasticity!" said Munx; the sensations produced by an adherence to the system are indescribable; and then the convenience,—a whole dose, if liquid, is absorbed by five grains of sugar of milk and if in powder, may be converted into an ample draught by a single dew-drop."

"Bravo! Doctor," said Hazleby: "a noble remedy. But now in a case of a violent accession of inflammatory symptoms, eh? what would you do *then*? use your infinitesimals,—eh? You might as well play a boy's squirt into a burning powder-mill."

"Oh," said Munx, "I do not admit the possibility of anything of the sort you imagine, while the patient is under the regimen of the Homœopathic school."

"Regimen," said Lady Lavinia. "What! must not we eat or drink during the time we are swallowing the pins' head and poppy seeds?"

"You may eat everything," said Munx, "everything,—fish, flesh, and fowl, (except ducks, geese, pork, veal, and shell-fish,) eggs, weak black-tea, and cocoa, are good. Milk you may have, and fruits boiled that are not acid. Drink toast-and-water, barley-

water, weak brandy—and-water—one eighth brandy; no wine, certainly no spices, no green-tea, no coffee, no salads, no malt-liquor, and, above all, no parsley, no onions, and no raw fruit of any kind—duck, is death; pork—poison; and parsley, perdition. One de-cillionth of a parsley leaf settles you; in fact, parsley, pork, and perfumes, are destructive."

Jack, who, having seen Munx eat most ravenously of veal pie, ham, and salad, watched him swallow glass after glass of his champagne, and beheld him munching pineapples as if they were turnips, could stand this absurdity no longer,—“Well Doctor,” said he, “how do you find this mode of training and feeding suit your own book?”

“Oh,” said Munx, “it perfectly coincides with the doctrines I have advocated in my book which I have published on the subject.”

“Not a bit of *that*,” said Jack: “I won’t have *that* at no price. I mean, how does it agree with you yourself?”

“Oh!” said Munx, “I—I don’t attend to the rules myself: I have no constitutional disposition to any particular disease. I—that is—I——”

“I think,” said Jack, “pine-apples is raw fruit; and the pie, which you have eat half of, is veal; the ham shows plenty of bone, the salad-bowl, which was before you, is empty; and, as far as the champagne goes——”

“By the way,” said Munx, who was the most impudent of all pretenders—Jack himself not excepted, “I hope it isn’t all gone.”

“Hickman,” said Buckthorne, “have you got any more champagne in ice?”

“Aye, aye, sir,” said Hickman, to the utter dismay and confusion of Jack, who found himself in almost as helpless a position in his own boat as a constitutional king with a cabinet full of over-bearing ministers.

“Depend upon it,” said Munx, “my dear Lady Lavinia, if you pursue a regular course of these medicines for eight or ten years, you will imperceptibly find your life extended. I merely state that abstinence”—(“Mind, Hickman, don’t pour the champagne over”)—“and that future generations will bless the discoverers of so magnificent an accession to the world of science in its most important department.”

A pause ensued. Fanny the timid—yet, when love prompted, the bold advocate of wit and genius, again said—“Aunt, Mr. Selwyn is ready to begin his poem which you asked him to read to us.”

“By the way, Lady Lavinia,” said Hazleby,—“I beg your pardon, one moment, Mr. Selwyn;—will you tell me what is the beginning of that beautiful little song of Lady Fanny’s which she sang us last week—something about ‘Fly, dearest Mary’—eh?”

“I remember,” said Lady Lavinia; “it was very pretty. I don’t

recollect the words, or the music. Sing it to us, Hazleby—do!”

“I can—not sing,” said Hazleby. “I wonder if Chipstead’s guitar is on board. Hickman!”

“Aye, aye, sir.”

“Is there a guitar on board?”

“No, sir.”

“Mind, when we come again, to remind your master to have a guitar,” said Hazleby: “one can’t do without a guitar. We must have a guitar. Miss Wattle sings to the guitar, and so do I. Don’t you recollect that charming little air that you gave us the last time we sailed together? It was moonlight—all calm: and so bright.”

“You never sing when you are asked,” said Lady Wattle.

“Upon my word, I would now,” said Hazleby, “but somehow I wetted my feet getting on shore last night, and have got a dreadful cold.”

“Well then,” said Fanny, “perhaps Mr. Selwyn will begin to read?”

“I shall be too glad,” said Selwyn, drawing his chair a little closer to the table.

“I don’t mind, however,” said Hazleby, “for once, Upon my word,—if I break down, don’t abuse me. I think I could manage to croak out a little thing which has just been published. I beg a thousand pardons, Selwyn!—I will not detain you five minutes. Hem, hem!”

“That’s just the way,” said Fanny in a whisper to Miss Lumden. “It is all jealousy of poor Mr. Selwyn: Captain Hazleby wouldn’t sing under an hour’s pressing at any other time.”

“Never mind, dear,” said Miss Lumden.

“Now then,” said Jack,—“go along, if it kills you.”

The look Hazleby gave Jack, if he could have perfectly seen, or entirely comprehended it, would unquestionably have extinguished him.

“Well,” said Hazleby, “*commençons donc.*”

The Colonel has married Miss Fanny,
And quitted the turf and high play:
They’re gone down to live with his granny
In a sober and rational way.
Folks in town were all perfectly scared
When they heard of this excellent plan,
For nobody there was prepared
To think him a sensible man.

For Fanny two years he’d been sighing,
And Fanny continued stone-cold,
Till he made her believe he was dying;
And Fan thought herself growing old.

So; one very fine night; at a *fête*
 When the moon shone as bright as it can,
 She found herself left *tête-à-tête*
 With this elegant sensible man.

There are minutes which lovers can borrow
 From Time, ev'ry one worth an age;
 Equivalents each to the sorrow
 They sweetly combine to assuage.
 'Twas so on this heart-stirring eve;
 He explained ev'ry hope, wish, and plan:
 She sighed, and began to believe
 The Colonel a sensible man.

He talk'd about roses and bowers;
 Till he dimm'd her bright eye with a tear;
 For though "Love cannot live upon flowers,"
 Miss Fan. had four thousand a-year.
 'Twas useless, she felt, to deny;
 So she used her bouquet for a fan;
 And averting her head, with a sigh,
 Gave her heart to the sensible man.

"Bravo! bravo!" echoed through the cabin; and everybody was, or seemed to be, delighted, except Fanny, who kept her eyes fixed upon Selwyn with an anxiety too characteristic of the interest she took in his proceedings.

"Capital!" said Buckthorne. "Whose words are they?"

"I can guess," said Lady Wattle.

"I can-not," said Lady Lavinia.

"Tell us!" said Buckthorne.

"Do!" said Jack, who only said so, because he *would* say something.

"They are so pointed," said Lady Wattle.

"And so personal," said Munx, "there's no mistaking the allusion. Name, name!"

"No," said Hazleby, "I really cannot; I am pledged."

"Never mind pledges," said Munx; "tell us!"

"Do!" "do!" "do!" "do!" said all the party, excepting Fanny and Selwyn, whose thoughts were turned on very different things at the moment.

"Well," said Hazleby,—"I suppose we are safe."

"I hope so," said Jack.

"All tiled," said Hazleby—"only don't betray me; because I hate breaking a confidence in these matters, let the person be whom he may."

"Not a syllable," said one:—"Close as wax," said another:—"Silent as the grave," said a third.

"Well then," said Hazleby,—"only I must whisper, because I

should not like it to be known beyond our little party;—they are by——”

“Yourself!” said Buckthorne.

“No,” said Hazleby, “they are *not*; but under seal, recollect—they are written by my man Dickinson, who, although I say it, who should not, is, perhaps, in French blacking and fashionable song writing, superior to any man of his *métier* I ever met with. He makes a mint of money by his muse; and I am too happy to encourage him in his poetical pursuits: but this is of course, as I have before said, all *entre nous*.”

This announcement was received with infinite delight by the company, excepting again poor Fanny, who fancied that what Captain Hazleby said was not true, and that the words were his own; the history of his literary valet having been invented extempore, for the purpose of wounding Selwyn’s feelings, and casting a reflection upon mercenary poets, as severe as those of Lord Byron, and quite as certain of being followed up by his taking whatever he could get for his own compositions. Fanny was probably right, and Hazleby had made the important sacrifice of his vanity for the gratification of his ill-nature.

“How kind you are,” said Lady Wattle, “to sing to us.”

“Very kind, indeed,” said Dr. Munx: “it was because nobody asked him; if we had pressed him, he wouldn’t have opened his mouth.”

“His minim-box, you mean, Doctor,” said Buckthorne, “in the eighth degree of expansion.”

“Well, Mr. Selwyn,” said Fanny, “will you begin? Maria and I are anxiously waiting.”

“I am ready,” said Selwyn.

“One moment, Selwyn,” said Buckthorne. “Hickman, you must have some cards on board? look in that locker,—by the door. I know there were some.”

“What are you going to do with cards, now, Mr. Buckthorne?” said Fanny.

“Why, Miss Hastings,” said Buckthorne, “Hazleby and I can go on quietly with our game while Selwyn reads.”

“I should like to join you,” said Lady Lavinia; “or, at all events, I’ll bet, and advise.”

“My dear aunt!” said Fanny.

“It is getting rather dark,” said Selwyn, whose patience was rapidly evaporating. “Are there any candles to be had?”

“Candles, Hickman!” cried Hazleby.

“None on board, sir,” said Hickman.

“My dear Brag,” said the Captain to Jack, “where are your candles?—never forget candles!—why we shall be in the dark for four hours before we get ashore. Bung,” continued

the vivacious cavalier, "where are we? Does it rain much?"

"Mizzling, sir," said Bung. "We are abreast of Stokes Bay, and as near as may be mid-channel. I think we shall have a spirt of wind presently."

"Now, Mr. Selwyn!" said Miss Lumsden.

"My dear Miss Lumsden," said Buckthorne, "do wait till Hickman finds the cards."

"It is getting dark," said Fanny.

"Oh," said Buckthorne, "there must be a light somewhere. Why we shall be like so many children playing blind-man's buff."

"What a charming little party, Lady Wattle, you gave us Tuesday," said Lady Lavinia, "those dear mazurkas. Mr. Brag, I tell you what—you must give us a ball."

"I have no house," said Jack.

"Lady Wattle will lend you hers," said Lady Lavinia, "and I'll invite the people."

"And I will manage the supper for you," said Hazleby.

"You are very kind; but——"

"But nothing," said Lady Lavinia. "You acknowledge me your sovereign,—I must be obeyed."

"Can't find any cards, sir, anywhere," said Hickman.

"Deuced provoking," said Buckthorne. "It can't be helped."

"But now, Mr. Selwyn," again said Fanny.

Selwyn opened his manuscript, and having hemmed thrice to begot attention, began—

"The silver moon on——"

"I beg pardon," said Buckthorne; "but I think the breeze seems to be springing up. I'll just step on deck. I'm getting fidgetty about dinner." Selwyn made way for him, and up the ladder he skipped.

Selwyn recommenced—

"The silver moon on——"

"One moment, my dear fellow," said Hazleby, "before you begin. I'll just step up, too: we can hear you extremely well on deck: but it is getting infernally close; that was always the worst of this yacht,—a kind of fusty smell."

"Well," said Lady Lavinia, "I really *do* think it very oppressive. Fanny dear, does it rain? I think I should like a little air myself."

"I thought you wished to hear Mr. Selwyn read his poem?" said Fanny.

"So I did," said her ladyship; "but it was not so hot then."

"Can't you tell us a funny story, Mr. Selwyn?" said Munx.

"Ah, do!" said Lady Wattle. "I don't mean one of your own, because you don't write funny things; but one——"

"I know no stories," said Selwyn. "I—if you wish me to read——"

"Oh, go, on," said Miss Lumsden; "they will be glad enough to listen when once you begin."

"Well," said Selwyn, "as you please."

"The silver moon on——"

"I say, by Jove!" cried Buckthorne, putting his head down the companion, "there's a ship on fire in Portsmouth harbour!"

"A fire!" cried one: "A ship!" cried another: "A ship on fire!" cried a third. "I hope it's a long way off," cried Jack. "Oh! how dreadful!" said Lady Lavinia. "Splendid sight!" said Lady Wattle. And away they all scrambled up to see this magnificent spectacle, sweeping everything before them, nearly upsetting the unhappy author in the rush, and leaving the cabin tenanted only by him and Fanny.

"I am quite ashamed of my aunt," said Fanny, "and disgusted with the rest of the party: their conduct towards you is inexcusable."

"Never mind," said Selwyn; "if I have your pity, I am satisfied."

"My aunt very much mistakes my character," said Fanny, "if she imagines that, by endeavouring to lower you in your own estimation, she can lower you in mine; such a course is foolish in the extreme,—an insult to the object of our esteem only increases our interest in him."

"I am repaid for all that has passed," said Selwyn. "I am esteemed?" He took Fanny's hand,—pressed it,—it was not withdrawn. "Loved?" whispered he. A gentle pressure of his hand by Fanny, was the practical answer to this deciding question. It was given, and she sank back on her seat, and burst into tears.

"Very fine!" said one of the party on deck; "—strong flame,—burns fiercer!"

"Where's Fanny?" exclaimed Lady Lavinia.

"She is below," said Selwyn, standing on the deck, close to her ladyship, a position to which he had attained by a sudden spring up the companion, having been "signalled" by a wave of Fanny's hand to leave her on the instant, lest the fire-worshippers might return and find them *tête-à-tête*; a discovery most unquestionably the prelude of a scene, the points of which would have received a wonderful accession of force from the appearance of Fanny in tears.

The party remained on the deck, watching the "splendid spectacle," which, instead of a ship on fire, proved eventually to be nothing but the flame from a brick-kiln near Alverstoke, until it began again to rain: they then hurried down again, and huddled themselves up in corners,—the darkness nearly complete, the wagg

worn out, and Jack himself fast asleep. Two only of the party were happy, and they only happy, because they were together.

Several attempts at renewing a conversation were made, and failed. Buckthorne's watch was a repeater, and the principal recreation during the voyage, was making it strike half-hours, and quarters, three-quarters, and whole hours, which it periodically continued to do until three-quarters past ten; at which period a slight increase of bustle "pon deck" gave indication of an approach to Cowes; and just as the church clock was striking eleven, the anchor was let go, and "The Psyche" brought up; the Yacht Club-house distant three-quarters of a mile, which, considering the wind was blowing fresh from the southward, was all that could be done for her.

"Well, here we are," said Buckthorne, "at last."

"Where?" said Jack.

"At Cowes," replied Buckthorne.

"Why, it is miles off," said Jack, looking at the lights of the town.

"No," said Buckthorne; "a mile, perhaps."

"And how are we to get there?" said Jack.

"In the boat," was the answer.

"Bung," said Hazleby, "it rains deuced hard still. Hadn't you better make the night signal for umbrellas?"

"Can't, sir," said Bung, and he whispered something to Hazleby.

"Oh, ah!" said Hazleby; "I forgot *that*."

"No, I wish I did," said Jack, who had overheard the captain's subdued observation that "Mr. Brag did not belong to the Club."

In the midst of this discussion, it was found that the boat could only take the party at two trips. It was pitch-dark, a good deal of sea on, and the rain beating right out of the harbour into the faces of the pleasure-hunters on their return from the chase. Then came the squabbling as to who should go first:—the ladies, of course,—then two gentlemen were to be selected; and while the decision was under debate, Hazleby and Buckthorne summarily decided the question by stepping into the boat and shoving off; and it is difficult to say which heart was the more agitated, that of Selwyn or Jack Brag, as they stood watching the boat, till it became a black speck upon the dark blue waves with which it seemed to struggle for existence. Selwyn almost wept to think that all he loved in the world was exposed to the discomfort and inconvenience of such a night, without his being with her to share her ills; and Jack trembled to think, that in another half-hour or so he should himself be doomed to a similar expedition.

His turn came. In about an hour the boat returned; and although Jack had made sundry sly suggestions about staying on

board till the morning, and talked somewhat largely of cold and rain, he was utterly defeated by the care and civility of Lady Lavinia, who sent back by the boat, boat-cloaks and umbrellas in plenty,—the latter being, however, rendered entirely useless by the force of the wind.

Away they went, much after the fashion of their predecessors, save that it blew harder and the sea was rougher,—a combination of circumstances which produced upon Jack a sensation to which he had hitherto been a stranger:—it was not sickness—it was not fear,—but it was a happy mixture of both, by which he was attacked. Every pitch brought, as the old women say, his heart into his mouth; and as the boat's bow dipped into the trough of the sea, he grasped the gunwale at his side, as tightly as possible, hoping to produce some beneficial effect, without any clearly-defined notion as to what it might be.

In getting out, Jack "missed his tip" in a jump, and first took to earth in three feet water; and was eventually lugged out and carried on shore on the back of one of his crew,—Munx observing that, although he had proclaimed himself to be remarkably hungry during their passage from "*Psyche*," he was not exceedingly *dry*!—a joke of Jack's own, for the commission of which by the Doctor, he would have been gratified to see him gibbeted. The *friends*, however, parted, each talking of the delightful day they had spent, and all separately voting the whole affair the most unequalled and unqualified bore.

Delightful or dreadful as it might have been to some, or all of the party, Brag himself was made perfectly miserable. His detestation of the sea he had overcome in order to do the thing properly; all his prudential precautions as to finance had been broken through, in order to carry the great point of putting himself practically on a footing with those with whom he wished to associate,—and, above all, to secure the prize to which he had all through life looked so anxiously, "a titled wife."

What is the result? He gets his yacht—*she* makes his party; his man, transferred from a ruined spendthrift, prepares the banquet; his unknown guests feast at his charge,—talk of things he does not comprehend,—of people he never saw,—until, seeing him completely overpowered by their *nonchalance*, they dispense with even the common courtesy of consulting *him*, or asking him for anything they may happen to want, referring wholly to the servant whom he had hired, as if he had been so hired for their sole use and accommodation.

During the whole day Jack had never rallied: pale and sad, the pert prig of other times remained both sick in body and mind, full of wrath which he dared not express, and of repentance which he was ashamed to admit; and when he got himself dried, rubbed,

and put to bed, he began to think that a theoretical pretender was at all events a cheaper and better thing than a practical one.

CHAPTER XXI.

OBNOXIOUS as Brag's first voyage had been to the numerous negative evils which ordinarily attend such enterprises, it certainly differed very considerably in one respect; it had, by the circumstances which it had involved, brought to a crisis the affair between Selwyn and Fanny Hastings.

In looking at society, it is more curious than agreeable to see how very much of selfishness pervades everything connected with its affairs. I have elsewhere recorded the opinion of my poor friend Moss, who said that six-and-eight-pence was at the bottom of everything in this world,—an opinion; of the correctness of which, every day's fresh experience the more fully satisfies me. Lady Lavinia's six-and-eightpenny feeling was evinced—it must be owned prudentially, in her resolution not to sanction a marriage between her niece and the young author; but her selfishness was still more strongly exhibited in pressing him into a constant association with her, because *she* herself enjoyed his society, and was pleased with the *éclat* of having even so tame a lion in her menagerie. There he was, and there he continued to be, and there he would have continued to be for the next year or two, living in a state of constant fever of dread and anxiety, hope and fear, had not her ladyship's ill-breeding, coupled, to be sure, with Captain Hazleby's coarseness, brought the affair to what some might consider a premature conclusion.

Whatever might have been the night-thoughts of the beaten, mortified, and mystified Jack, after he retired to roost, and not to rest, those of Selwyn at his inn, and Fanny Hastings at her aunt's, were of a nature not much better calculated to promote slumber. She had confessed—committed herself; he was pledged to *her*.

It is wonderful to think what a very little time it takes to do very great things;—a match to a mine; a finger on a trigger; a knife to the rope which holds the balloon to earth; the last blow of the mallet against the last dog-shore of a ship on the slip.—Here, the one—one squeeze of a hand in a obscure corner of a tallow-chandler's yacht had decided the fate of two people,—changed the whole character of their relative positions, and opened to their views and imaginations prospects of their future existence, of which the night before they would scarcely have dreamed.

No few hours are fuller of interest, of every varied nature and character, than those which follow an offer and acceptance. The

hour after a rejection is one, perhaps, of triumph to the "scornful lady," and perhaps, she revels in it; but when the "aye" is once pronounced, see what a train of thoughts occupy her mind:—the doubts—the fears which agitate her, lest she has rashly yielded her heart, confided herself and her destiny to the care of her lover, and bound herself to share his fortunes, bear with his temper, bend to his will, and submit herself to his dictation, however gently asserted or mildly urged; to live with him perhaps through a long life, and have no confidence but in him. All these things were floating in Fanny's mind, mingled, it is true, with bright hopes and cheerful anticipations. Selwyn's genius and accomplishments were all to her; the one would secure him competence,—the other soothe and charm them in his leisure hours:—and they could and would be so happy in their cottage?

Selwyn felt equally sanguine and enthusiastic as to the ulterior results, but with a manly mind, so different from the devotedness of woman, his ardour was damped and his rapture checked by the doubts which occupied him, whether he should be able, in his present circumstances, to offer his beloved such a home as she could, without submitting to the most serious inconvenience; accept. These calculations and speculations, which engrossed the whole night, were concluded by a resolution the next day to try fair means at all events, before he resorted to foul; and afford Lady Lavinia the opportunity of giving him her niece, before he took the liberty of taking her without permission.

As for Brag, when he sat down to breakfast, he was, as they say, "quite another guess sort of man" from what he had been; and as he swallowed his tasteless fish and unsatisfactory "broil," every indignity which he had suffered during the preceding day rose in his mind. To think that the servant, whom he really had engaged, should be referred to, and even deferred to, in preference to himself; that although he had paid—or rather incurred—eight hundred pounds for the yacht, it should still be considered by his free-and-easy visitors as if it were still Captain Chipstead's; that he should have been left on board for the second trip of the boat, when he certainly ought to have gone ashore with Lady Lavinia; that he should have been soused in the water, and carried "pick-back" on shore by one of his own crew; and that Dr. Munx, of whom he had never heard before he saw him ready to eat his luncheon and drink his champagne—certainly not in infinitesimal quantities—should have made his own man laugh at him by making his own joke on his unpleasant condition,—were all galling enough: but when the apprehension of the absolute necessity of giving a ball to a hundred people of whom he knew nothing upon earth, stared him in the face, poor Jack began to think that he had carried his joke a little too far.

Yet after all, Jack will not be a much greater fool than his neighbours in this respect, even if he consent to victimize himself in such a proceeding; for, incredible as it may appear, the fact is, that within these few last years, instances have over and over again occurred, in which Nobodies, who happen to have fine houses, have been glad to let the few Somebodies they chance to know, invite the Everybodies of *their* acquaintance to balls and parties, in order to make a display; and other cases in which, on the other hand, the Nobodies are permitted to borrow the fine houses of the Somebodies, in order to make the *fête* come reasonable to the noble owners, who are, of course, entitled to make their own party as they please.

Jack's temper, acidulated as it was, was by no means mollified by the appearance of Hickman while he was breakfasting, with a list of things which he said were positively essential to the comfort of a yacht, which had not yet been provided; nor was this new accession of ill-humour at all qualified by Mr. Hickman's intelligence, that Captain Hazleby's man had made out the said catalogue of comforts by his master's direction. Jack read the paper, and desired Hickman to leave it, resolving at all events to show his *own* servant that he was determined to judge for himself,—at the same time trembling inwardly lest, by making any resistance to the importunities of Hazleby, he should subject himself to the fire of his ridicule, which he dreaded and detested as much as he did the pert satire of the odious Dr. Munx.

Scarcely had he swallowed his first cup of tea before a three-cornered note arrived from Lady Lavinia, begging to know at what time they were to be on board.

"What does she mean?" thought Jack:—"on board! What! does she want to go again to-day, after all the miseries we suffered yesterday?" This question, put to himself, was speedily answered by Hickman making his appearance to enquire how many were expected at luncheon. What could he say? What could he do? Here he was:—he had bought the yacht obviously to gratify this particular lady, who felt herself consequently bound to show her gratitude by earnestly patronizing it. In fact, he had at length gained the great object of his life,—he was literally sought and courted by an earl's daughter, who with that enviable rank, combined the more substantial attributes of a well-jointured widow. The consequences of this success it was as difficult for him to avert as it had been easy to foresee. A fish in the air, or a bird in the water, could not be more completely out of its element than Jack when he was in the society with which he was always anxious to mix: there is but one word conventionally used which aptly expresses his position under such circumstances,—he was regularly "*basketted*."

So long as horses and races, and gates and fences, were the to-

pics of conversation, so long could Jack carry on,—and the whole thing went smack, smooth, and no mistake; but the Isle of Wight was not a hunting country, nor did the sports of the field at all assimilate with the delicate sensibility of Lady Lavinia, who nevertheless felt grateful in the extreme for the absolute devotion of Mr. Brag to her will and wishes, which afforded so striking a contrast to the negative civility of the rest of the Cowes' circle.

"Ask Bung," said Jack to his servant, "what time we are to go; and I'll write a note to Lady Lavinia to know how many I am to have to luncheon."

"Her ladyship has sent Mr. Tackandtape, the upholsterer," said Hickman, "to say that he can let you have every article of furniture,—forms, benches, tables, chairs, lamps, candle-sticks—that you may want for the ball, and will be glad to supply you on the most moderate terms."

"The ball!" said Jack—"what ball?"

"The ball you are going to give, sir," said Hickman, "at Lady Wattle's. Her ladyship's cook has been here this morning to tell me that he can manage the whole of the soups and anything hot in his own kitchen; and that——"

"But I don't know what you mean!" said Jack.

"You settled it all yesterday, sir, on board," said Hickman.

"Did I?" said Jack:—"well, we'll see about it to-morrow then. I—I'll write to Lady Lavinia:—is her servant waiting?"

"Yes, sir," said Hickman,—and retired.

Jack's literary powers were not of the highest order. He wrote a note—tore it up: wrote another,—his great puzzle being as to the mode of spelling one or two words most essential to the perfection of his present communication; those were, yacht and Psyche. There was a choice of evils, for either would answer his purpose; but the alternative was no advantage: he spelt yacht, yott; then he did not think that that looked right; then he could not recall at the moment the regular mode of doing it, but established the spelling of a signboard in the street of Cowes to be *the* thing—upon which, at *that* time, and may be now, for all I know, the word was spelt yatch.

Psyche was metamorphosed into Physce, and ultimately made into Physic, but it would not do; and so, after spoiling some four or five sheets of note paper, inking the table-cloth, and the morning-gown, in which he was breakfasting, he rang the bell, and desired Hickman to tell Lady Lavinia's servant that he was too unwell to write, but begged her ladyship to make her own arrangements.

This message was scarcely delivered when two letters from London were delivered to Jack, exemplifying upon this special occasion the truth of the adage, that,—"*misfortunes never come alone.*" One was in a hand unknown to Jack, the other he at once recog-

nised as having been written by his mother : there could be no doubt which of the two to open—that from the old lady could only contain family matters ; what might be enveloped in the folds of the other epistle, he could not guess, and accordingly its bonds were burst, and Jack read as follows :—

“ Lincoln’s Inn, August 17th.”

“ DEAR SIR,—I hasten to inform you that the case—‘Grindleston, *versus* Brag and others,’ was tried yesterday at Hertford, before Mr. Justice Dodo. The jury was composed of very intelligent respectable men ; of course we had not the assistance of the counsel whom I named to you, inasmuch as they do not go circuit : but we had the leaders, and every exertion was made to secure a favourable result. I am sorry to say, as indeed I had the pleasure to mention to you when we were conferring on the subject I expected it to be, that the verdict was against the defendants, with fifty pounds damages.

“ The conduct of the opposite party was marked by a very unnecessary degree of malignity. Plaintiff’s counsel was instructed to go into matters with which, in my humble opinion, they had no business to meddle, and in fact adopted a course which I never could bring myself to recommend or advise, and it became perfectly evident to me, from the line taken, that the whole weight of vindictiveness was to be thrown upon *you*, to whom the learned gentlemen on the other side made some most improper and uncalled-for allusions, founded, I have no doubt, either in malice or misinformation on the part of the Grindlestones.

“ I have written by this post to Lord Wagley, and shall forward the county paper of to-morrow, in which the trial will no doubt be fully reported.

“ I have the honour to remain, Your faithful servant,

“ John Brag, Esq.”

“ HENRY LEVERET.”

“ That’s a regular spill,” said Jack to himself. “ I wonder what the fellow said of *me* ; couldn’t have hinted at my attempts to destroy Grindleston’s peace of mind ;—no fault of mine, it was all Mrs. G.’s doing, and no mistake ; only she got frightened, and so repented ; that’s all. Perhaps he gave some slap at the shop, shouldn’t wonder : and that infernal attorney to think of sending the report of the trial *here* ! I hope he’ll send it to *me*. I’ll take care it goes no farther if he does ; fifty pounds damages,—five on us,—that’s only ten a-piece. Then to be sure, there’s the costs. Well, I’m going it now. However, I have got my three hundred pounds at my bankers—nest egg ; *that*, I won’t touch, ‘please the pigs,’—pay small bills in ready cash,—let the big ones wait. I’ll do yet with Lady Lavinia’s four thousand a-year ; but it strikes me that there’s no time to be lost. If that infernal paper comes here

to-morrow, I'm done, straight up, right down, 'and no mistake."

Having thus far soliloquised, he proceeded to open the second letter, and read,

"No. 71, Elisium Row, Brickfields, Pentonville, (near the Gas-Works.)

"DEAR JOHN,—I am come up here for a change of hair, for I have been in a delcat state since we parted at Lewis ; and a pretty parting it was : and such a gurney nobody ever had in this precious world. I got wet to the skin on account of the rain, which powered torrens on me, and then I went inside, and sat, and quite smoked in dryin'. But I have such a tail for you. When we got to the place where they do the chops, two fine frizzlemegig dandies which had been in the inside of the coach, got out, and guv me and J. S. their places. In the coach was a midole age respectable-looken woman, which sot opposite me ; and opposite J. S. sot a little French woman, with green speckteckles on, and so we went all sochable, and I had forty winks off to sleep, never a-dreaming of no nonsense of no kind, and we got safe to the 'Oliphant and Cassell,' and was put into what they call the branch coch, to take us to the citty ; when, just as we was drivin off, the little moun-sheer woman which wore the barnacles, whips them off her nose, and says to me, out of the window, says she ; with the greatest imperence, 'Good day, Mrs. S. ; when next you goes to the play I hopes you'll behave better.' Can't you guess who it was ? Why, as true as I'm sitting here looking at the brik-fields, and smelling the gas for the benefit of my'ealth, it was that monkified Miss Ogg, —she, which played the nigger's wife the night before.

"I wur so mad with Jemes, I could have killed him ; he swore till he was black in the face he did not know it himself but I said to him, says I, 'You must have knowed it was the minx's mother. She hadn't got no barnacles on.' Whereupon he confessed he did know it, but thought I wur so wet I'd better get in, and it would have done all well enough, for I shud have knowed nothink about it if it had not been for her imperence which could not keep her secret to herself.

"Then Jemes up and told me that the tall dandy which got out when I got in, was a Mr. Somebody, who acted the nigger ; which I could not bileeve, because he was as white as you are : but he swore to it, and told me that the way he made himself look black was by rubbin' his face over with pomatum and lampblack, which I cannot bileeve, likewise, for it is so nasty. However, Jemes has behaved very well too me since, never mentions that cretur's name, and has taken me these nice apartments, for which we pay only five and twenty shillings a week, coals included, which I think moderate, for the hair is uncommon fine, and I have, besides the Gas Works, a beautiful view of the Kilns, and the Fever Hospital,

which is quite close. Jemes comes home here as soon as he can in the evenings, except Saturdays, when he sleeps in town, as also on those days when he goes out for orders, for which purpose he has got a nice horse and shay, which, I am sorry to say, is of no use to me, because I cannot get into it on account of my leg.

"What I particularly write to you about, is this:—we have had a good large order for articles to be sent to a Captain Wilford in Berkshire. They were staying at a hotel in town when the order come, and we know nothing of them. Jemes has just heard that they are at Cowes, and although you do not like business, he thought that, without putting yourself out of the way, you might just find out whether they are safe customers to deal with. A line at your earliest convenience will oblige.

"I have seen nothing of the fine Miss since we parted at the 'Oliphant;' and so I hope not to be made oneasy any more upon her account. I hope you are quite well, and happy; I shall be very glad to see you when you come back to town. I have always something in the house here; and the people are very civil, and will do up anything for you in a few minutes, come whenever you will.

"Your affectionate mother, E. SALMON.

"P. S. Their names is Wilford, and lives at Brunkton House, somewhere near Reddin. J. S. desires his regard, and to mention your bill for 500*l.*, doo 20th inst., which he has been obligated to pay away, and which, in course, must be paid."

What the effect of these two letters was upon Brag's temper and spirits, the reader may easily imagine. The intelligence from the lawyer he thought bad enough; but that which he received from his respectable parent was even worse. In the first place, Jack had cunning enough of his own, improved, as all his suspicions on the subject had been, by the conversation of Mrs. and Miss Hogg, at the Lewes playhouse, to be perfectly assured that the tender attentions of Mr Salmon in establishing his drooping wife in the ready-furnished lodgings at Pentonville, were attributable rather to affection for somebody else, than for herself; and the establishment of the horse and shay, as his mother called it, into which, by some fortunate coincidence of circumstances, she could not get, was strongly corroborative of his worst suspicions. If Mrs. Salmon's "leg" prevented her taking exercise with her husband, Miss Hogg laboured under no such difficulty; and as to the orders, which the poor patient Griselda spoke about, he felt satisfied the only orders these excursions secured, were, orders for the playhouse at which Miss Roseville figured.

But then, in the second place, the idea of setting *him* to institute inquiries into the character and respectability of a family co-resi-

dent with himself at Cowes, in order that he might report to Jem, whether he might trust them with so many pounds of candles or so many gallons of oil; and all this crowned by the observation contained in the pithy postscript about the five hundred pounds bill just coming to maturity. It was a sad damper, and Jack could hardly rally sufficiently to proceed, according to his promise to Lady Lavinia's. The consequence of his delay in his visit was the following note from her ladyship, who began to apprehend that she had lost her dangler, or at least her influence over him.

"DEAR MR. BRAG,—Where are you? We are waiting for you. I have secured Captain Hazleby and our dear doctor for the cruise. Lady Wattle is not well, but Miss Wattle will go with us, and Captain and Mrs. Wilford, who are extremely anxious to make your acquaintance. They have a very nice place in Berkshire, and you must cultivate them. *I like them; so must you.* She sings beautifully, and is ravenously fond of the sea. You must have a guitar on board. I don't think Mr. Selwyn will be able to go with us; however, do you come to me directly.

"Yours truly,

L. NEWBIGGEN."

This billet, shining like glass, and redolent of musk, added, if possible to Jack's embarrassment. Here were the people named in his mother's question as to character, coming to him to eat the profits arising from the "articles" which they had ordered—actually to feast upon stores and moulds, and quench their thirst with lamp oil. In another shape, it is true. What could he do? Sham sick, as he often did at school;—let her ladyship and party enjoy the cruise and command the yacht. This he resolved to put into practice; and accordingly despatched an answer to her note, stating himself to be exceedingly ill, and unable to go to sea; and putting Psyche entirely at the disposal of her ladyship and party.

It must be confessed that the day opened gloomily: not perhaps meteorologically speaking, but as far as Jack's own affairs were concerned. He felt anxious to have some conversation with Lord Wagley on the subject of the lawsuit, but somehow he fancied his lordship had not latterly evinced anything in the way of encouragement in his manner towards him, and did not like to take the liberty of writing to him to beg him to call at his lodgings.

Painful and disagreeable as were the letters Jack himself had received, it turned out that the communication which Leveret had by the same post made to Lord Wagley was of a nature likely more severely to damage our poor pretender. It contained a detail of the facts as they had really appeared on the trial, and of the virulent attack of the counsel, which contained all sorts of allusions to Brag's pretensions and assumptions, and some other remarks, in which

his connexion with Lord Tom Towzle, another of the defendants, was mentioned in such a manner as to induce Lord Wagley to write that very evening to Lord Tom in Paris, to obtain an elucidation of the hints which he had thrown out in his communications with his solicitor, who of course had been associated with Leveret in the conduct of the defence.

Lord Wagley felt, however, that common justice required him to make no marked alteration in his conduct towards Brag until he had ascertained the real history of the case, and therefore anticipated Brag's intention of inviting him to call, by making a visit in the course of the morning.

"Well," said his lordship, "our affair is settled, as you know."

"I have heard so from Leveret," said Jack. "He tells me, that I got a roasting from one of the lawyers: it's lucky if he don't get a basting from me."

"Oh," said his lordship, "nobody minds what is called forensic abuse; see how they abuse each other occasionally, denounce their learned friends as absolute blockheads, and carry a point by frightening an honest witness under cross-examination into telling the most engregeious falsehoods for the furtherance of the ends of justice. Leveret has promised to send me down the report of the trial on Saturday, and I'll send it you the moment I have read it."

"I shall be obliged," said Jack.

"Pray," said Lord Wagley, *à propos* to nothing, "when did you see Towzle last?"

"Lord Tom?" said Jack.

"Yes."

"The last time," said Jack, "I dined in company with him was at Sir James Gunnersbury's at Dover. The last time I saw him, I was at luncheon with the Ilfracombes, where he came in and paid me a lump of money which he owed me—which, as I say, was all right up, straight down, and no mistake."

"Did not you tell me, when you first came here," said Lord Wagley, "that you were going to ride his horses at Paris?"

"Yes, in course," said Jack, getting particularly fidgetty at the nature of Lord Wagley's enquiries and the manner in which they were put.

"What made you throw him over?" said Lord Wagley; "he's a capital fellow in his way, and deuced fond of you."

"Why," said Jack, "I'll tell you, my lord. A sister of mine made an unlucky marriage some years ago, and died abroad; and her husband I have been obliged to cut dead as mutton. And he and his second wife, and his sister—we needn't enter into particulars—with whom I was once uncommon intimate, are in Paris; and so I thought it would be as well not to risk falling in with

them, which would, fifty to one, have ended in falling out; so I told Lord Tom the truth, and he said I was quite right, and no mistake."

"Oh! that was it," said his lordship, affecting apparent satisfaction at the account. "I could not think what could have induced you to disappoint him. Do you sail to-day?"

"I'm not well enough, my lord," said Jack; "besides, I have some letters to write. The *Psyche* is going. Lady Lavinia has made her party, and they sail about one."

"Upon my word," said Lord Wagley, "my pophecy has come true; 'The *Psyche*' has got a mistress. I knew how it would be."

"Yes," said Brag, "I think her ladyship is hit hardish. A woman of her time of life wants somebody to keep her establishment going: we shall suit uncommon well; let her have her own way—at first at least. She likes *my* yacht now; I shall like *her* by-and-by. I must marry off Fanny; Selwyn must have her: they love each other—why not?"

"Nothing, I believe, but the want of money stands in the way of it," said Lord Wagley. "The death of Fanny's mother and father left her with what is called a lady-like fortune of some five or six thousand pounds,—for, by some unaccountable oversight, no farther provision was made for her in anticipation of events which certainly were possible in any case, and under circumstances, and which actually did occur in *hers*."

"That's hard," said Jack, thinking at the moment that he had better change his policy with regard to the lovers whose cause he had espoused, inasmuch as if Selwyn should succeed in obtaining Lady Lavinia's consent to the match, her ladyship, who, with all her follies and fantasies, was extremely fond of her niece, would in all probability follow up her acquiescence by the appropriation of some part of her income for their support. Lord Wagley's intelligence produced this revolution in his designs; and his lordship's manner during the explanation had the effect of checking Jack's volubility with regard to his certainty of marrying the Lady Lavinia, and his intentions as to the future arrangement of her property after he had attained it: in fact, he was conscious of a difference in the noble lord's behaviour, although the noble lord himself made every effort to prevent his observing any change; the very anxiety to appear natural and at ease gave an appearance of playing a game, which Jack saw,—did not quite understand,—but did not in the least admire.

After a few casual observations about "The *Psyche*," the weather, and whatever public news was stirring, his lordship took his leave, Jack feeling the influence of his increased formality and civility, to the extent of hindering him from, in the slightest degree, alluding to the yet much-desired honour of admission into the club

To him succeeded, as a visiter to Jack, Selwyn himself, who came, of course, for an invitation to the yacht. Nobody who has not been really and truly in love,—and he who has, must not be now a very young man, since the sort of love of which I speak is altogether obsolete,—can possibly imagine the submissions, and degradations even, which a lover is willing to encounter and endure, when the result of his humiliation is the happiness which an hour,—a half,—a quarter,—ten minutes,—or even five, passed with her he loves, can confer. Selwyn, with his mind and genius, naturally laughed at poor Jack; and as far as his yacht, his luncheons, his pretensions, and absurdities went, would rather have made him a subject for his pen than come to him as a petitioner,—but Fanny was to be of the party. By what means he had learned that Jack himself was not to be on board, it is impossible for us to ascertain; and if it *were* possible, it would be “vastly ungenteel” to tell: the truth was, that Selwyn had found out that Fanny was “going afloat,” as we say,—and that Jack was not:—what was he to do?

“What?” said Jack,—“go on board now; sham waiting for me. I never told you I wasn’t coming, or going, or whatever it is: And I tell you what, S., the very best thing you can do is, if old Lavy, my lady, refuses her consent, run off with the girl. My yacht shall be ready any hour of the night; slip you up to Southampton, or push you off to Portsmouth, smack smooth, right up, straight down, and no mistake.”

“You are too kind!” said Selwyn: “but then, you see, our means won’t bear us out in such a proceeding. My income is very small; my literary trade—call it so—precarious; and dear Fanny has scarcely anything but what her aunt, who loves her and hates me, may choose to give her.”

“I wouldn’t let that stand in the way,” said Jack; “the old-uns melt uncommon tender when the thing’s done. Take my advice,—bolt!”

“I doubt,” said Selwyn, “whether Miss Hastings would undertake such an expedition. It is a very important step, Mr. Brag, in a woman’s life, to discard relatives, friends, and connexions, and to break every old tie which binds her to her family, to make a new one. I—”

“Why,” said Brag, “I know the female sex; and, as I have always said, a female is a female, which is something. That they are odd and strange-minded, nobody can deny; but my belief is, that if you and she run off in couples, the whole thing will come right in the end. I, you know, care no more about that poor old body than you do. Don’t you see, she’s what I call over head and ears with me. As I told Waggy just now, I have bought the yacht to please her;—and she is pleased, now she has got it all her own

way. You trust to me; I've nailed *her*; you, in course, hate her: you take *your* way—I'll take *mine*—eh? Don't you see, that's all clear, and no mistake."

Selwyn was rather startled by this loose morality of Jack's, and really wondered to hear a man talking so coolly, and calculating so coldly, upon the consequences and results of his already decided (in his own mind) marriage with Lady Lavinia. This struck him the more forcibly for two reasons:—first, because a true and poor lover, hearing marriage spoken of with any relation to money and advantages, feels in the highest degree indignant at such a discordant mixture of affection and interest; and secondly, because, however harsh the conduct of the mother, or aunt, or whatever she may be, of the creature he devotedly loves, may anger him or excite his resentment for the moment, still, the reflection that she is so closely allied to that creature,—the human divinity of his adoration,—softens down all that irritation, and he is ready to respect the guardian for the very care she takes of her matchless charge.

Jack, however, relieved from the over-awing presence of his friend Waggy, as he called him, let loose all his usual absurdity, and talked to Selwyn of "tickling the old trout," "settling granny," and many similar feats, equally well and elegantly expressed; adding to his confident assurances of complete success, the whole history of the light-horse volunteer in the ebony case, and the beautifully illustrated pedigree of all the Newbiggens of Bumbleford,—upon both of which, having taste for neither arts nor arms, he was pleased to be particularly severe.

Selwyn was, to say truth, disgusted with the view with which his voluble friend had favoured him of his character and principles behind the scenes, and felt very much inclined to speak to him in terms, if not of disapprobation, at least of expostulation, with reference to the language he had adopted in speaking of the family to a member of which he was so much attached; but love gained the mastery over friendship, and, after a struggle highly honourable to Selwyn's feelings, he terminated the dialogue by thanking Jack for his hint as to going on board the yacht to wait for him, although he knew he was not coming, and in less than ten minutes after was installed in the cabin of "The Psyche," thinking it better to remain below till the arrival of the ladies, lest his appearance on deck might raise an alarm in Lady Lavinia's mind, and induce her to reland with her fair treasure, and, if she did not give up the excursion herself, leave Fanny "on the wild-sea banks," like Dido, with a willow in her hand "waving her love."

Jack, as soon as his visitor was gone, betook himself to the task (no easy one to him) of answering the letters which he had received, and which had so completely upset him: that to Mr. Leveret was as follows, and is highly indicative of the notion which

Jack had established in his mind of the characters and customs of what are called legal advisers.

“Cowes,—August 18—.

“DEAR SIR,—Yours of yesterday duly received. I thought, from what you said, we should be beaten. I don't mean to stand any nonsense; and if the lawyer who was on their side said anything disrespectful of *me*, I shall take care to make him unsay it, and no mistake. As I never like to be longer in debt than I can help, and prefer paying ready money,—short the discount,—I will thank you to send me your little bill, and I will settle it forthwith.

“Your obliged servant, JOHN BRAG.”

This was sealed, and addressed to the solicitor, and likely enough it certainly was to astonish that gentleman when he received it. Jack calculated that the “little bill” would amount to perhaps ten or fifteen pounds,—at least his share, as he called it,—and therefore he thought it would sound mighty fine to flourish off about ready money, not in the slightest degree comprehending the difference which exists in society between transactions with traders, and business with professional gentlemen.

To his mother he wrote as follows :

“Cowes,—August 18, 18—.

“DEAR MOTHER,—Your's came to hand to-day; I hasten to answer it. I am getting on here in earnest. I have, what I call, fixed a title at last: she's an oldish one, but has hard upon four thousand a-year of her own. She has got a great fancy for sailing, but the nobs which has yatches here won't have her aboard at no price; so in course I thought the way to settle her was to get hold of a yatch of my own, which I did accordingly through Lord Wagley, a friend of mine, who will do anything I tell him;—he franks this letter for you:—so I gave him my bill for the price of her, which is called “The Physce,”—eight hundred pounds,—whereat I see you stare like a stuck pig. I'm not so soft as you may fancy: if I marry the old one through having the yatch, it is quite worth the money; and if I don't, the bill I have given, isn't particular likely to be paid: but this I don't care about, because, worse come to the worst, I can sell yatch before the bill comes due.

“The old one has got a niece,—an uncommon pretty one to be sure,—and she's over head and ears, as I say, with a sort of a poetry-writing chap called Selwyn. The old one won't stand their marrying, because there is no stumpy neither side; but I think, if he was once to coax and carney her over, she perhaps would make them an allowance and give her consent: so I am putting him up to carry Miss Fanny off, and have offered to lend him my yatch, which, from what I have heard the old one say, will set her so against her niece, as nothing never was like it; in which case I

shall keep up her anger, and so there'll be nothing paid out of the jointure for them.

"I don't belong to the Yatch Club here, because I like to be independant; besides, I don't much like some of the people who are in it. They worry my life out to be one of them, but I sticks fasts to my negative, and no mistake.

"As to Captain and Mrs. Wilford, you may tell Jim, they are safe customers; they are on board my yatch now, out sailing with my lady,—Lady Lavinia Brag as is to be; in course they are respectable, or they would not be there.

"As for Molly Hogg, don't you trouble your head about her; she is not worth caring for. I am sorry your leg prevents you getting into the one-horse chay, because the country air would do you good. Rely upon it, I will come to see you the first minute I can after I have led Lavy to the halter. I have got an excellent servant, who does for butler and valet all under one.

"I haven't heard anything more of Brown or the doctor. To be sure, Kitty's affair was uncommon unfortunate; only if Brown hadn't married as he did, he would only have been a serjeant now, or perhaps been dead.

"As for the five hundred pounds, I am sorry Jim has paid it away, for I shall not be able to take it up, inasmuch as it impossible for me to get tacked to my granny till after that is due anyhow. I told you I'd do it at last, notwithstanding all the story Mrs. Cropper told Jim. I thought it best not to stop at Eastbourne, for, though I had been there so short a time, I saw people hinting and winking about me and Mrs Peckover, which sat in the opposite box to us the night of the row at the playhouse; and, though it was all nonsense, yet, when a female is concerned, it is best to be safe, and no mistake; besides, Peckover, although a slow coach, is uncommon good-natured, and it wouldn't be right to break his heart. •

"I hope you are happy. I think Jim is a right good fellow, and am glad you took him for better for worse. Am glad you like your lodgings, which certainly isn't dear at five and twenty shillings a-week, specially with coals included. I have told Wagley the direction—Pentonville, without mentioning the name of the row, or about the gas-works or brick-fields, because Pentonville is sure to find you, and 'row' looks low; not that Waggy knows who you are; because it is quite right not to let that cat out of the bag till I have got the other cat into it: so all snug, smug, and no mistake. I conclude you have painted the back-parlour, and shifted the copper by this time.

"I have no more to say at present, but my best love. Hope I have written satisfactorily; and remain, with best regards to Jim,

"Your dutiful son, J. B."

This also, folded and sealed, was transmitted to Lord Wagley, with a request for a frank; Jack's object being to clench the nail, as he called it, with his mother and Jem, by getting a cover from a lord, which he fancied might operate upon the latter's mind, so as to induce him to renew the five-hundred pounds' bill, or at least not enforce the payment; while, his mother's name being now changed, he felt no difficulty in sending the address to his noble friend. The letter reached his lordship just as he was starting for his yacht, bound to Southampton; and, immediately upon receiving it, he sent word it should be done, and thrust it into his pocket.

In the yacht, and just before he reached Southton, Lord Wagley proceeded to fulfil his promise; and deceived by the illegibility of what Mrs. Brag called "Jack's pot-hooks and hangers," combined with a certain degree of obscurity in the cabin, his lordship wrote the address:

"Southton, August eighteen, 18—

"Wagley."

"Mrs. Salmon,

"Petersham."

And having thus accurately directed the tribute of filial affection, he tore up the "example," and despatched the epistle with his own letters to the post-office.

Jack having, what he called, cleared off business, began to reflect and consider, to the fullest extent of his capability for such a purpose. The note which Lady Lavinia had written to him upon hearing that he could not sail; the message that she hoped he would be well enough to come to hear some charming music in the evening,—that *the* Mrs. Captain Wilford would sing for him,—and that it should be quite snug and select,—all spoke to his too willing ear the language of devotedness: and then to think that this very lady who was to sing for him was the very lady about whose solvency for the amount of a box of candles he had been commissioned by his mother to inquire; and then to think of the certainly altered behaviour of his friend "Waggy," and to doubt about what the lawyer had said to him; and then to fear the communication which might, and most probably would, take place between "Waggy" and Lord Tom, in consequence of their being associated with him as defendants in the case,—all combined to harass and fever him, and at the same time to assure him that, let him take what course he might with regard to his projected alliance with her ladyship, he had no time to lose.

Therefore was it that he resolved, *coûte qui coûte*, to present himself at her ladyship's little party, which, if "Psyche" contrived to get back from Portsmouth, whither she was gone, in time, would be, no doubt, extremely agreeable. Thus determined, he ventured forth in the afternoon to take a stroll towards Egypt, dur—

ing which he might revolve all his various plans in his mind, so that he might regulate by his own decision of the day, his proceedings in the course of the evening.

CHAPTER XXII.

DURING the period of suspense which must naturally intervene, under any circumstances, between the departure and return of a yacht from Cowes, professing a voyage to Portsmouth, it may, perhaps, be as well to let the reader know something of those personages of our drama, who, in its earlier part, were prominent characters, and who, owing to the management of one of the party, first caused the explosion of Brag's absurdity, without a match.

The agreeable Mrs. Dallington, and the lovely Blanche Englefield, as Mrs. Cropper the house-keeper informed Mr. Salmon, had become—"nothing loath,"—the respective wives of Sir Charles Lydiard and Mr. Francis Rushton. Sir Charles and his lady passed the honeymoon at his place in Gloucestershire; Rushton and his bride went, as the 'world' will go, to Paris: and never were four people more entirely changed by the relative change of their several conditions than this *parti carré*.

Lydiard, once in possession of the kind-hearted widow, doubted no longer. Convinced by the unreserved communication of thoughts, and opinions, to which the character of husband entitled him, of her single-mindedness, and unqualified affection and esteem for him, all the doubts which disturbed, and all the fears which alarmed him, were banished from his mind: while Rushton, convinced of the purity and excellence of his blushing Blanche, felt no longer irritated, or peevish, if she chanced to bestow a passing smile upon another; perfectly assured by an intimate acquaintance with her sterling good qualities, that she would never have accepted him, spite of her own knowledge of the little irregularities of his temper, had she not meant to bind him to herself by ties of affection and tenderness, which to a heart ardent as Rushton's was, must be invincible and irresistible.

So here, then, were reduced, in four short weeks, two turbulent spirits, either after his own fashion; and the nervous suspicious lover, and the fiery doubting suitor; subdued into two as happy husbands as ever entered the holy state of matrimony.

Thus it is:—a lover must be jealous of the object of his affections; because, in that state of probation in which a lover is doomed to live, there can be no love without jealousy: but when once the beloved one becomes a wife, the signs of jealousy on the part of her husband are both disgusting and degrading; degrading to himself,

as implying a conscious inferiority; and disgusting, because it betrays a suspicion that his wife will practically evince her consciousness of that inferiority by preferring somebody else to *him*.

Fuller says, "Where jealousy is the jailour; many break the prison, it opening more wayes to wickednesse than it stoppeth; so that, where it findeth one, it maketh ten dishonest." And so it is. What does the generous, while yet untainted Othello say?—*he* who, as Mrs. Salmon described him, was "as black as my hat, and a nigger into the bargain."

"———'Tis not to make me jealous,
To say my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company,
Is free of speech, sings, plays, and dances well:
Where virtue is, these are more virtuous.
Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw
The smallest fear, or doubt of her revolt,
For she had eyes, and chose me."

As Rushton had no very particular friend to act Iago, he contented himself upon Shakspeare's principle; and the jealousy, which none can separate from love during a long and anxious courtship, was buried at the foot of the altar at which he made her his wife. Nothing in truth could be more perfectly happy than Lydia and Rushton; and nothing connected with their felicity would have interfered to disturb the resolution of Brag to be "everything in the world," and Lady Lavinia's husband into the bargain, but the appalling fact that Sir Charles and his Lady, and Mr. and Mrs. Rushton, had emerged from their sweet solitudes into the world at Ryde, which very watering-place had been fixed as their rendezvous at the end of the double honeymoon.

This, Jack certainly did not know, nor in the slightest degree did he anticipate such a *contre-temps* while he was lounging "the sultry hours away," during the voyage of "*Psyche*" to Portsmouth. However, these curious coincidences will occur, however particularly disagreeable their occurrence may be. Still, there is nothing in the world so silly as discounting grievances; when they come due, it is quite time enough to honour them, and pay the amount: so, even if Jack *had* known that his "love's bitter foes" were at Ryde, he would not have agitated himself unnecessarily until they had, by some accident, arrived at Cowes.

It is not to be denied that Jack felt himself more comfortable, and more at ease, strolling about upon the beach, than he was at any period of the previous day on board his yacht; and he pictured to himself the gratification he should experience in seeing her enter the harbour, her taunt mast "towering to the skies," and her ample main-sail swelling to the breeze.

Yet in the midst of these higher aspirations Jack could not altogether avoid the recollection of his earlier days and associations.

He began to worry himself now about his sister's fate and death, to fidget himself about his mother's marriage, and even feel something like a regret about Anne; it was, "in course," no use minding it now; but it all came into his head as he sat watching the waves rolling in upon the shore.

With regard to his yacht, Brag's vanity was amply gratified by her appearance, beating up from Portsmouth,—wind being as per last; but the day was bright and clear, and as he watched her buffeting the waves he said to himself, "That's *my* yacht;" which being, in point of fact, almost the only thing he ever could call his own, was a very gratifying soliloquy. He waited until she neared the harbour, and then proceeded to his lodgings, not wishing to be seen by his guests on their landing; inasmuch as the wags, if they pounced upon him at once, might fancy his indisposition feigned, or at least construe it into an indisposition to a second voyage.

The party had not long deposited themselves in their respective homes, before Lady Lavinia's attentions to the little man were renewed in the shape of a note of enquiry after his health, and containing a line in the way of postscript, to inform him that having found two friends of hers, at Portsmouth, who were coming to the island, she had ventured to give them, and one or two of their servants, a passage in "The Psyche." "I hope," added her ladyship, "you will not be angry with me for having taken this liberty. I think, if you even are so now, you will forgive me when you come here this evening, for they are, I find, people whom you know. I hope you are busying yourself about our dance; I will not terrify you by calling it a ball. Lady Wattle will be here to meet you, and we have arranged everything;—it must be Tuesday,—remember that. I have made out a list of the people to have; here short notice only is required, the shorter the better, however. It comes as a surprise, and people like it; and we are all so snug. I only wish my cottage were large enough to manage it here. *Au revoir*," etc., etc.

"I'm in for the ball," said Jack,—“that's clear enough, and no mistake. I wonder how long this is to last before I may venture to hint my intentions in regard of the match; and I wonder who the deuce my two friends who came up with some of their servants in my yacht may be. I wanted no friends to come here;—Stiffkey and young Gunnersbury perhaps; or Brown and his wife; or perhaps that sour-faced doctor that's married to Nancy. I don't think I'll go to the old woman's to-night:—see what the morning will do.”

Jack puzzled himself a good deal how to act in this emergency: if it were any of the people who first came into his mind who had arrived, a meeting with them would be utter annihilation. Why the deuce hadn't my lady said at once *who* they were? Stiffkey would sink him at the first shot,—not to speak of the I. O. U. Gun-

nersbury would insult him. It could not be Lord Tom himself. At all events, go he would not,—go he could not; and therefore, in order to guard himself from any surprises of that sort, he wrote, as well as he could, a little answer to Lady Lavinia's note, saying he found himself so ill that he had been obliged to go to bed; and lest any extraordinary measure of her ladyship's kindness might convict him of evasion or deceit, he forthwith proceeded to disrobe and retire to his couch; thus punishing himself for the sake of keeping out of the way of an apprehended detection for a few hours. The next day must unearth him; for whoever his friends were, the very fact of his indisposition would bring them to see him. It mattered not; he had not nerve to face the danger, and so the note was despatched immediately: and as Hickman had not yet come on shore from the yacht, his master was snugly deposited on his couch, all ready to act the invalid "smack, smooth and no mistake."

The note had not been gone more than half an hour before Jack's ears were assailed by the noise of feet ascending the stairs of his domicile. This announcement of approach was speedily followed by a smart tapping at the bed-room door. Jack heard it all; but as to the doomed culprit every minute is precious, he affected not to be aware of what was happening. The knock was repeated, and Brag felt it was useless to try any longer to stave off the visitor, whoever he might be; "and a come in," uttered in a tone of voice which sounded very much like the negative invitation sometimes given to a bore, of "you won't stay and dine with us," was followed by the irruption into his apartment of Heneage Peckover, of Womanswold in the county of Kent, Esq.

"Why, Brag, my boy," said the squire, "what's the matter? Lady Lavinia is all in a stew about you—eh!—so Mrs. Peckover told me to come and inquire after you, and thank you for our passage up from Portsmouth, and for some deuced good luncheon, which we got on board your yacht."

"My dear sir," said Jack, "how are you? I'm very glad to see you:" which was not altogether untrue,—for there were many other persons who would have been infinitely more unwelcome. "I'm uncommon ill: caught cold yesterday, I take it."

"Deuced sorry for that," said the squire. "You must rally and rouse; only don't come out in the evening if you think it's cold;—nurse. As Mrs. Peckover says, one day's penance is no great sacrifice; and Lady Lavinia agrees with her that you had better not think of coming to her to-night; she has written to you, she says."

"Yes," said Jack; "I have answered her billy-do,—asking me to come."

"I know," said the squire; "and I have brought you a billy don't, to tell you not to go.—Ha, ha, ha! I made that joke my-

self; and Mrs. Peckover tells me it's as old as the hills. I don't care—I don't trouble my head with those sort of things: however, you'll come after breakfast to-morrow. Mrs. Peckover is very anxious to be introduced to you."

Now this was a fact, and is only a proof of that curious sympathy which prevails amongst women, even to a somewhat advanced period in life. Mrs. Peckover had taken the most unqualified aversion to Jack, only from seeing him at a distance, and knowing that he was one of her husband's "cockney friends,"—a description associated in her mind with everything coarse and disgusting, and which kept them, as we have already seen, proscribed from what she called *her* circle.

During the voyage from Portsmouth, Lady Lavinia had spoken of Jack in terms which at once released him from the stigma which the lady so generally cast upon the Nimrods of Cockaigne with whom her good-natured husband was so constantly in the habit of making acquaintance; nor were the favourable opinions of her ladyship at all weakened in Mrs. Peckover's estimation by the appearance of "things in general" connected with our hero. The yacht itself and its appointments bespoke the man; and having admitted all the propositions of Lady Lavinia with regard to him, she concluded their conversation by expressing her pity and commiseration for his unhappy position at the Lewes play, where, by some strange accident, he had become involved in the most disagreeable circumstances, all of which she described with the greatest possible point and the minutest accuracy.

"Mrs. Peckover," said the squire, "has been telling Lady Lavinia all the history of the old mad-woman at the playhouse at Lewes, and made her ladyship laugh immoderately."

"She has, has she?" said Jack to himself.

"Who the deuce was the woman?" continued the squire: "Mrs. Peckover wants to know if you ever found out."

This was beyond his hopes; the real fact was not known, after all.

"Found out!" said Jack—"not I. Didn't you?"

"No," said the squire. "Mrs. Peckover got rather unwell at the play after you had been driven away, and so Lady Patcham insisted upon her going back and sleeping at her house; and we didn't go to the inn, else we might have known, I dare say."

"Oh!" said Jack, forgetting rather too much that he was an invalid, "you didn't go back to the inn?"

"No," said the squire. "Mrs. Peckover got a bed at Lady Patcham's, and I slept upon some chairs in the library. The house was crammed full of people. However, I don't care for that sort of thing. Ha, ha, ha! Besides, as Mrs. Peckover says, there's nothing like light and shade in this life. You never enjoy comfort

half so much, if you are always comfortable, as you do if you rough it sometimes."

Jack's satisfaction at the happy state of ignorance in which Peckover and his lady were still involved, was so great, that he began to regret having taken fright at the approach of his unknown friends; nor was he much less pleased at hearing that they had seen nothing of his friend Colonel Stiffkey, who had returned to Eastbourne only for one day, and had proceeded on a tour along the coast, with his friend Mr. Gunnersbury. "Mrs. Peckover, I believe," added the squire, "thinks there is a chance of their coming here, which will be very pleasant, because she likes the colonel mightily. He is a great amateur artist; and she admires pictures, and prints, and all that. For my part, I don't care much about such things. Ha, ha, ha!"

Peckover prolonged his visit to Brag, and talked over the only subject upon which the little man could talk, and spoke enthusiastically of the fine runs he anticipated in the coming season, and gave an animated description of the horses, "black, white, and gray," which he had in his stable, until the maid-servant of the lodging came into the room to announce that one of Mrs. Peckover's footmen was below, and wished to speak to his master.

"Bid him come up," said the squire.

He did come up.

"Well, what is it, Stephen?" said Peckover.

"My mistress has sent me, sir," said Stephen, "to say, that if you don't come to dress directly, you will be too late for dinner."

"Odds bobs!" said the squire. "Who'd have thought it: how time flies in pleasant company! I'll be home instantly. Go on first; tell Mrs. Peckover I'm coming as fast as I can: so, so! Well, Mr. Brag, I shall make a favourable report, and say you'll be with Lady Lavinia after breakfast. Good day,—good day! Dear me! only think of the time!"

And away hurried the gentle giant, leaving Brag in almost as great a perplexity as that in which he found him. The escape about his mother's exposure was a great relief; so was the circumstance of Stiffkey's sudden departure from Eastbourne. But then, the impending threat of his visit to the island was a complete set-off in the account against those. In fact, look which way he would, Jack felt that expedition was essential to his success, and that no time was to be lost.

As soon as Peckover was well clear of his lodgings, Brag got up and dressed himself, being now secure against farther interruption; and resolved to make a dinner, if Hickman would permit him to do so, upon some of the innumerable remnants of the luncheon of which Peckover had spoken so highly; and having, with-

out the aid of his valet-butler, butler-valet, completed his toilet as far as he intended, and seated himself on his little sofa, in his dressing-gown and slippers, he rang the bell, and summoned that minister to his presence.

"Hickman," said Jack, "I fancy I could eat some dinner;—something cold, I should prefer,—eh?"

"I don't think, sir," said Hickman, "there is anything cold in the house."

"What! have they cleared off the luncheon?" said Jack, "eh? entirely,—smack, smooth, and no mistake?"

"No, sir," said Hickman, shaking his head with a sort of half *déjà*, half diplomatic wriggle; "but then we never bring away anything from the yacht. The captain and the crew consider——"

"Consider!" said Jack. "Why, haven't they got plenty of salt-beef, pork, and the deuce knows what, to eat?"

"Those are for long voyages, sir," said Hickman: "but there really was very little left; and I—— It isn't usual, sir."

"Oh!" said Jack. "Well, if it's right, it's right; and what's right can't be wrong: so there's an end of that, and no mistake. Get me something then to eat."

"Something plain, sir?" said Hickman, "a——"

"Yes," said Jack.

"Will you have a *perigoo*?" said Hickman. "I can get that in a minute."

"Any eggs and bacon?" said Jack.

"Sir!" said Hickman, looking aghast.

"Something nice, and not common, said Brag. "I'm peckish."

"A *salade à la volaille*?" said Hickman.

"Oh, anything," said Jack, "only let it be quick; for my head-ache is gone, and I want to eat."

Hickman, who was an admirable servant in his way, and who knew every turn and twist of Cowes, was not long in preparing a nice little repast for his eccentric master; who, however, ready and willing, when he was out hunting, to take a snack without a table-cloth, had no dislike to see his "feed," as he called it, put down all sweet, and clean, and no mistake.

In half an hour, a cloth, like unsunned snow, set off to the best advantage a remarkably nice little dinner; and Jack growing bold by experience, ordered himself a bottle of the champagne which was so extremely popular on board the yacht. This, a pint of sherry, and, as he proposed, a bottle of claret to wind up with, were the liquids he selected to imbibe; and, bating the visions of the colonel and the young bombardier, Jack was as brisk and as gay as

"Jove in his chair,
Of the sky, lord-mayor;"

and dismissing Hickman from attendance, he poured glass after glass down his throat, each bumper adding to his resolution to pop the question to my lady without further delay,—having been acquainted with her certainly less than three weeks, his pretensions, however, having been, it must be owned, considerably encouraged during that period by the bright sunshine of her ladyship's eyes.

By about nine o'clock Jack had drank himself into a beautiful state of mistification. He had lost sight of the colonel and Gunnersbury, and had reached a sort of seventh heaven of Orlebarism: he had begun to soliloquize aloud,—certain evidence of his real state,—and had nearly

"Screwed his courage to the sticking-place"

with regard to Lady Lavinia, when a rapid, rattling rat-tat-tat at the house-door set him wondering. His doubts were speedily dispelled; for in two minutes after the noise had ceased, Peckover stood before him.

He saw the vision—or rather two—with surprise and horror: here was the man who had left him in bed ill, sick, and wretched,—the very emissary who bore his tale of woe,—returned to find him not only excessively jelly, but having on his table the dreadful evidence of "foregone conclusions"—bottoms of bottles; the spiry champagne, the yet distinguishable sherry, and the tall Château Margot, were all before him. What was to be done?

"My dear Brag," said the squire, "I'm delighted! Quite right?—up again and thriving! I'm right glad to see what I do. Deuced pleasant little party at Lady Lavinia's: but Mrs. Peckover told me that I ought to come down and see how you were, and sit with you a bit. They are all acting charades, and singing, and playing, and all that; but you know, as Mrs. P. says, I don't trouble my head with those sorts of things—ha, ha, ha!—so I am come to do a bit of cozey with you."

"I'm delighted," said Jack, "and no mistake. What will you have, squire—something hot, sweet, and strong as the old women say?"

"Don't mind if I do," said Peckover. "Mrs. Peckover says spirits are injurious; but I don't mind—ha, ha, ha! The women don't like men to drink; it keeps them away from them. However, I'm here upon what I call duty—ha, ha, ha!—and deuced pleasant duty too."

"In no time," as Jack would have expressed it, brandy, etc. and hot water, lemons and sugar, and everything else in the world, were put down, and the squire and Jack *tête-à-tête*; Jack, how-

ever, having got considerably the start of his friend, and being more communicative and inquisitive than perhaps he would have been had he not strictly adhered to the rules of the Temperance Societies, just now so much in fashion, which add hypocrisy to sensuality, and render that, which has hitherto been a social failing, a solitary vice.

"Lady Lavinia," said the squire, "has made out a list of the people for your ball Tuesday. Mrs. Peckover tells me that you have got the credit of 'going it' here, and that all the women are in love with you—ha, ha, ha! I never trouble my head with that sort of thing—but so they say."

"Why," said Jack, "I believe there is something in that. They are uncommon good-natured,—eh?—you know, and no mistake."

"The ball is fixed for Tuesday, Mrs. Peckover tells me," said Peckover.

"Oh!" said Jack, "it is, is it?—umph!"

"I say, Brag," continued the squire, "Mrs. P. thinks that you and my lady are likely to—eh?—put your horses together, as we say; don't you understand? She is all agog about you; and—so—ha, ha, ha! I never mind those sort of things myself: but only—Oh! they do like these *fêtes* and yachts—eh?—and the flirtings, as they call them."

"Why," said Jack, "I own I think Lady Lavinia—eh?"

"Think!" said the squire—"Mrs. Peckover is sure—what I call cock-sure—and I'm glad of it. A nice place she has got down in our part of the country, and all snug."

"Straight up, right down," said Jack, "and no mistake?"

"Four thousand a-year, Mr. Brag," said Peckover; "at least so Mrs. Peckover tells me."

"But," said Jack,—“help yourself, squire,—what do you think of Mr. Selwyn and Fanny? Was *he* there this evening?—he was with you in the yacht."

"Why, Mrs. Peckover thinks him clever," said the squire. "He is desperately in love, she says, with Fanny Hastings. I never trouble my head with those sorts of things—ha, ha, ha!"

"But how," said Jack, "if she was to marry Selwyn without my lady's consent?"

"Wouldn't give her a farthing," said Peckover; "at least so Mrs. P. assures me."

"Not if they were to—what d'ye call the thing?" said Jack.

"What?" said the squire.

"Hop the twig," said Jack. "I forget what the genteel word is—go to Scotland, or somewhere: *helo*pe, that's it."

"Never see her again," said Peckover.

"Deuced good plan for me to get him to go," said Jack.

"Only it would break Lady Lavinia's heart," said Peckover; "at least so Mrs. P. insinuates."

"Well," said Jack, "but how long does it take to break a female's heart?"

"Can't say," said Peckover; "never trouble my head much about those sorts of things—ha, ha, ha! Dare say you know better than *me*."

"Why," said Jack, looking excessively cunning, getting exceedingly tipsy, and being uncommonly impudent, "between you and me and the post, I flatter myself I do, and *no* mistake."

"However," said Peckover, "Mrs. P. told me to show you the list of the company invited:—Lady Wattle—but that you know—gives you her house, and Lady Lavinia has sent out the invitations—not more than seventy altogether. Mrs. P. says she has written off to Stiffkey, who, since I was here she has found out is actually at Ryde; and here," continued the squire reading, "are sixty-one down. From Ryde, there are the Lydiards and the Rushtons, great friends of my wife—two sisters; she says they are charming people:—Gunnersbury, and two or three of his cronies:—and Lord Wagley told Lady Lavinia that he had every reason to hope that Lord Tom Towzle, a particular friend of yours," he says "would be here from Paris before that—comes by Dieppe to Brighton. I forget all the names, for I don't trouble my head much with those affairs."

"Very pleasant," said Jack; "eh?—Tuesday?"

"Yes, so Mrs. Peckover tells me," said the squire, "and they have arranged the whole thing. Your butler, who was on board the yacht, seems a capital servant: Mrs. P. says that he understands the thing perfectly, and has made every arrangement in the best possible manner. I never care much about those things myself—ha, ha, ha!"

"'Gad!" said Jack musingly, "that's pleasant. Well, however, there are six days between this and Tuesday. Squire, will you have a cigar?"

"Why," said Peckover, "if I thought Mrs. Peckover would be gone to bed before I got back."

"Stay till you are sure," said Jack.

"Because she can't bear the smell of tobacco," said the squire.

"Never mind," said Brag; "you can say you were sitting up with a sick man—eh?"

The squire had arrived at an amiable point of readiness to do anything that was proposed, and Hickman was summoned. Cigars were produced, and the squire and Jack began their fumigatory proceedings. More brandy was required, and the two worthies continued until past two o'clock in the morning blowing their clouds, and opening their hearts to each other in the most en-

tirely confidential manner ; which sweet communings might have been of the most seriously disadvantageous consequence to either or both of them, had it not been that when Mrs. Peckover's servant came to call home his master, neither he nor his sprightly host were sufficiently clear in their intellects to know what they had been saying for three hours before ; and when they woke in the morning, what had occurred during the latter part of their *sederunt* was all irrevocably lost and forgotten.

Hickman, however, that invaluable treasure of a servant—the always-to-be-trusted with untold gold—was not guilty of any such omission : sober and discreet, and ever alive to his own interests, he drew a chair to the outside of the door of the little drawing-room in which his master and his friend were ensconced, and there heard the whole of the confidential interchange of facts feelings, and opinions, which neither of the actors themselves recollected when they rose ; but which decided Mr. Hickman in the opinion that his master was “no go,” and that the squire was, as his master had called him, a “slow coach.”

One thing, however, remained indelibly fixed upon Brag's mind when daylight and reason returned,—one object which had outlived all the revelry, and maintained its place amidst all the spirits and smoke, and confidences and communications,—the list of the people invited by Lady Lavinia to the projected ball. What was to be done?—the thing was inevitable : he had surrendered the sceptre into the hands of Lady Lavinia, she had issued her commands,—six days only intervened. His course was clear—he must draw her into a committal of herself to him before that evening came : once accepted, he might laugh at the malice of his envious revilers. If absolutely necessary, he would fight one of them,—this resolution only flitted through his mind ; but, at all events, if the “old one” said “yea,” he cared little or nothing for all the rest.

Jack, however, as the reader knows, was an infinitely cleverer, person at saying than doing ; and although he had made up his mind for “immediate action,” the indiscretion of the evening had actually produced the illness he had only feigned before ; and the poor little man completely knocked up by the “excess,” which, not in the slightest degree affected Peckover, was forced to remain *perdu* the whole of the next day, during which he was honoured by a visit from Lady Lavinia, who called to enquire after his health, attended by her “Tail,” as she was proceeding to embark in “The Psyche,” which again was ordered to sea, under her ladyship's command,—virtualled as before by Mr. Hickman.

The circumstances connected with Jack's real illness were luckily not known to Lady Lavinia ; since Peckover would not, upon any consideration, have communicated to Mrs. P. the excesses

which led to it, and in which he had so joyously participated. His non-appearance, therefore, on the Wednesday was attributed only to a continuation of his indisposition, and as Hickman was not likely to get anything by betraying the secret, he did not volunteer any explanation, nor, as his friends had the usufruct of his yacht, and the agreeable et-ceteras, nobody took the trouble to make any very particular enquiries.

The next day, found Johannes redivivus. Jack was all right, and no mistake; his head-ache was gone, and the rose, which had given place on his cheek to the lily, bloomed all fresh and healthy; and

“Richard was himself again!”

It was a beautiful morning, and all nature looked cheerful; but as it grew later, it became somewhat overcast, at least as far as Brag was concerned: just as he had ordered breakfast, the sound of the bugle announcing the arrival of the post, rang through his ears, the promise of the lawyer to transmit the county newspaper containing the report of the trial flashed into his mind, and after a sickening suspense of nearly half an hour, Hickman announced that there was nothing for him by post, thus releasing him from his doubts, and satisfying an anxiety about “his letters” which he had never evinced before, but exhibited upon this occasion; much indeed to Hickman’s surprise, who of his own knowledge knew that since he had been in his new master’s service he had received only two.

After having obtained this reprieve, Jack, consoling himself upon the principle “that no news is good news,” began to brush up; and resolved to make an early visit to Lady Eavinia, in order to show that, the moment he had recovered from his indisposition, he flew upon the wings of love to

“——— do as was his duty,
Honour the shadow of her shoe-tie.”

But alas! the avalanche was already detached from the mountain, and hung over Jack’s head suspended but by one huge icicle, which this noon-day’s sun would infallibly thaw. The Damoclesian sword, however, was still invisible to him, who, with his little legs horizontalized on his lodging-house sofa, “a world too” short for any animal of greater length than himself, sat sipping, in all the security of self-satisfaction, some *café au lait* of Hickman’s *fabrique*; when to his surprise, and perhaps, dismay, he received from the hands of the said Hickman a large packet, which had arrived per mail, although not per post, addressed to “John Brag, Esq.” with the three honorary etc. etc. etc. “Cowes.”

Jack opened the despatch with an air of importance which might have been supposed appropriate to a secretary of state of other

days, when secretaries of state had something to be proud of. He found it to contain an extremely plump lump of paper, with a small note on its outside, looking like the pilot-fish on the nose of the skark, while he is prowling for prey in the blue waters.

The pilot he opened, and read :—

“Lincoln's Inn, August 19th, 182—

“SIR,—Wholly unaccustomed to communications of such a nature as that with which I have this day been favoured by you, I have, according to your desire, transmitted my bill, and beg respectfully to decline any further interference with your affairs.

“I am, Sir, yours, H. LEVERETT.”

“His back's up, I shouldn't wonder,” said Jack; “that's a pretty go—who cares? let's look at his account;” and accordingly out it came,—and thus it ran :

“JOHN BRAG, ESQ.

TO HENRY LEVERETT.

£ s. d.

August 2.—Attending you, and conferring with you as to the case of Grindlestone versus Brag and others, and taking your instructions thereon	13	4
Same day.—Writing to you on the same subject	6	8
Same day.—Writing to Messrs. Tapps, Tatlock, and Shackleton, to inform them that you had put the case into my hands, recapitulating to them your observations upon the same	13	4
August 3.—Attending you at your Lodgings, advising and conferring on the circumstances attending the case, and taking further instructions thereon	6	8
Same day.—After luncheon, attending you before the Yacht Club-house rails, and stating to you that I had written a letter to Messrs. Tapps, Tatlock, and Shackleton	13	4
Same day.—Before dinner, attending you, and conferring with you about the purchase of the yacht “Psyche,” in which you expressed your wish to purchase her for reasons then specified, namely, that you desired to become a member of the Royal Yacht Club, and could not belong to that society without being the owner of a yacht of more than 40 tons	13	4
Same day.—In the evening, attending you, when you resumed the discussion, and I stated I thought, as it was growing late, you had better postpone it till the morning	13	4
Same day.—After supper, attending you home, when you repeated the opinions you had previously stated, and I repeated my previous disinclination to go into anything like business until the next day	13	4
August 4.—To writing you a letter, begging you to fix a time when I might attend you to confer upon the propriety of the purchase of the yacht “Psyche”	6	8
Same day.—To perusing and considering your answer	6	8
Paid messenger to carry ditto	2	0
Ditto ditto to bring back answer	2	0

£ s. d.

<i>Same day.</i> —Calling on you at two o'clock, when you were out, enquiring of your servant-maid where you were, and receiving her answer that she really did not know	13	4	
Attending Lord Wagley, at your desire, to make necessary enquiries about the "Psyche," which you had expressed a wish to purchase; when his lordship explained to me all the circumstances of the sale, and the reasons why Captain Chipstead, who had married Miss Allanby, of Twisterly, daughter of Lieutenant-colonel Allanby, did not receive the amount of fortune which he expected with her when he made her an offer, and reading over a long correspondence between her guardians and Captain Chipstead on the subject, with a view to ascertain the reasons why the "Psyche" was sold at a price so much below her real value	1	1	0
<i>Same day.</i> —Writing you a long letter, stating to you all the circumstances which transpired during this long conference	13	4	
Messenger	2	6	
<i>August 5.</i> —Writing to Messrs. Tapps, Tatlock, and Shackleton, to acknowledge the receipt of their letter acknowledging the receipt of mine	6	8	
Attending you on board the "Psyche" and a long conference with regard to the fittings and furniture thereof	13	4	
Looking over the inventory of her stores, as delivered over by Captain Chipstead	6	8	
Comparing ditto with the stores themselves	6	8	
Copy of ditto for you to keep	6	8	
Attending you in a walk towards Newport, and conferring at length with you upon the question whether a yawl-rig was better than a cutter-rig, of which your Captain, Bung, had spoken when we were on board; in the course of which conference you mentioned to me that you did not know the difference, and I stated that I was totally ignorant of the subject altogether	13	4	
To enquiring, at your desire, of the turnpike-keeper on the Newport road, which was the nearest way to Northwood church	3	4	
To attending you with his answer thereon, that we must go across the fields to the left, which lead down towards the river	3	4	
Writing you a letter, stating how sorry I was to be obliged to decline accepting your invitation to dinner, being engaged to go to Ryde upon professional business	6	8	

"Well," said Jack, when he had read thus far; "this is going it. I've heard a good deal of this sort of thing, but I never saw it before:" and getting extremely tired with the details, he ran his eye "slap down," as he would have said, to the bottom of the last page of the bill, the "tottle of the whole" of which, amounted to something above one hundred and thirty pounds, including nearly four hundred items much like those already selected, the amount

of his share of all the fees of counsel employed, retainers to those not required, proportion of damages, travelling expenses, stamp-duties, and, in short, such a phalanx of abominations as no man ever saw or dreamed of in conjunction.

But, appalling as was this perilous account, and important as the result of Jack's earnest request to be furnished with it, because he always preferred paying ready money, it was "a mere flea-bite" to what was at hand.

Jack had again put "Psyche" under Lady Lavinia's orders, and announced his intention of being of the party himself,—had, according to Bung's advice, fixed one, for the hour of starting, and settled Southampton as the place of destination—issued his instructions to Hickman to prepare an extra fine luncheon, in order to get into the good graces of Mrs. Peckover, who it was clear had very considerable influence over Lady Lavinia,—and had just finished his toilet for the morning, when Hickman again made his appearance with a letter from Lord Wagley. Jack, finding it heavy, was quite divided between the pleasure of receiving a communication from his lordship, and the apprehension that it might contain the dreaded report of the trial.

"Any answer wanted?" said Jack.

"No, sir," said Hickman,—not quite so respectfully as he might have answered, if he had not listened at the drawing-room door the night before.

Jack proceeded to open the letter, and read thus :

"SIR,—Some mistake having occurred in the direction of the enclosed letter, it has been returned to me from the general post-office, and I very much regret having been obliged to open it, in order to ascertain its owner; and still more, that, as it had no signature appended to it, I have been compelled to read a great part of it, in order to discover by whom it was written.

"I am, sir, your obedient servant, WAGLEY."

With this, as the reader must anticipate, came back Jack's confidential letter to his mother, which, if his vanity had not as usual interposed itself, would have been properly addressed and punctually delivered; but which now had necessarily undergone a perusal in order that it might be sent to the place from whence it came.

Jack looked at it—held it up—opened it, and began to re-read it—in hopes that it might not be so thoroughly explanatory of his intentions, and so totally destructive of his schemes, as at the first blush he apprehended, but as he proceeded line by line to retrace its contents, it was all too true—every project was there related, every subject touched upon, and all his artful contrivances exhibited at full length. He saw in the pages of this dreadful epistle

the death-warrant of all his hopes, unless Lord Wagley's sense of honour was such as to seal his lips with regard to intelligence accidentally, or rather incidentally, obtained from a confidential letter addressed to another person.

It is probable that Lord Wagley, however he might have considered it prudent or necessary to regulate his own future conduct towards Jack, would not have betrayed his secrets had not another letter reached him the same morning from Lord Tom Towzie, which contained a regular detail of Jack's proceedings during the last few weeks of his lordship's association with him.

Jack was certainly staggered. The first blow that Gully gave Gregson in their memorable fight near Dunstable, was not a greater puzzler. He resolved to put the whole case at issue at once; and brushing up his hair, and pulling up his shirt collars, he put his hat on his head slantingly, and, arming himself with his little switch, proceeded in less than an hour, without answering Lord Wagley's note, to Lady Lavinia's cottage.

When he arrived within eye-shot of the little lawn, he perceived Selwyn and Fanny sitting together on the bench placed, as the reader remembers, just outside the door: this looked badly for his plans of acidulating "granny;" and therefore he resolved to appear particularly pleased at the sight. But, whatever his intentions might have been with regard to his conduct upon the occasion, they were completely, and by no means agreeably, frustrated by the sudden start-up of the lovers from their delicious *tête-à-tête*, their sudden rush into the cottage, and an equally sudden closing of the door.

"Jack 'didn't like the look of things by no means;" however, he continued his march "straight up, right down, and no mistake," to the gate—that gate which erst stood open to invite him in; it was locked: he pulled the bell; the pet livery-servant of Lady Lavinia, the civillest creature in the world, who ran about Cowes with *billets doux*, and all sorts of messages, after Jack's heels, came to the barrier.

"My lady nearly ready?" said Jack, settling his collars.

"My lady is not at home," said the lacquey, with a look black as thunder, and as impudent as he could possibly make it.

"What!" said Jack, "is she gone on board?"

"No; *she*, as you call my lady, is not gone on board," said the man; "and her ladyship is not going—and more than that, her ladyship has desired me to tell you, she shall not be at home till the end of next December." Saying which, the man left the gate and the enquirer, who in casting a glance towards the drawing-room, in which were deposited the light-horse volunteer in the ebony case, and the family-tree of all the Newbiggens of Bumbleford, he saw, scarce hidden by the muslin blinds, Lady Lavinia.

Mrs. Peckover, Captain and Mrs. Wilford, and Selwyn and Fanny Hastings, all laughing most unceremoniously.

This *was* a coup,—where was he to go?—what should he do?—send a message to Lord Wagley?—ridiculous!—see him he might—remonstrate with him he would—hear what he had to say—that was the plan: and accordingly, going at a pace something between a walk and a run, Jack retraced his steps towards the Parade, when, just as he reached the high ground at the back of the Castle, he beheld, to his infinite amazement, his beautiful Psyche sailing majestically from her moorings, with the Royal Squadron burgee fluttering at her top-mast head, and a St. George's ensign flying at her gaff.

This most certainly surprised him, who on the instant began to flatter himself that, as a set-off for his other discomfitures, arising he now could scarcely guess how, he might have been elected into the club: and yet—what *could* it mean? A few minutes discovered the whole truth.

"Well, Mr. Brag," said Peckover, whom he encountered just at the corner; "this is a bad business—I'm deuced sorry for it, but Mrs. Peckover tells me that I ought to horsewhip you."

"Sir!" said Jack.

"She does, by jingo," said the squire; "she says you are a bad 'un—but I don't trouble my head with those sort of things, ha, ha, ha! Only if you *will* go about talking of ladies of character and reputation as you *do*, and swearing that they are all in love with you, and all ready to throw themselves into your arms, Mrs. Peckover says, she thinks it very probable you'll very soon get every bone in your little body broken to a smash,—ha, ha, ha!"

"This," said Jack, "is uncommon queer language, Mr. P., and no mistake."

"Never mind about that," said Peckover. "I have only told you what Mrs. Peckover tells me.—Now hear the message I have to deliver from Lord Wagley: he says, he finds you wish to sell your yacht; so, under those circumstances, he has desired me to hand you back your acceptance for the eight hundred sovereigns, which I have got here; and as Captain Chipstead disapproves of the sale, he has taken possession of her, and she is gone to Portsmouth to bring over Lord Tom Towzle, who had got Chipstead's promise to have her."

"But," said Jack, "she is *my* yacht."

"Come, come," said Peckover, "take it easy, as Mrs. Peckover says; never make quarrels without cause. Here's your bill, there's the yacht; Wagley will pay the men's wages, just as if Chipstead had never sold her, so make the best of the bargain; and, if you follow the advice Mrs. Peckover desired me to give you, you'll what I call cut and run,—ha, ha, ha!"

"But Lady Lavinia?" said Jack.

"Has shut her doors against you for ever," said Peckover. "Mr. Peckover tells me the reason is, that she is furious about your plan of irritating her against her favourite niece, and delighted with the honourable conduct of young Selwyn in refusing to take your advice. She has given her consent to their marriage and, as Mrs. Peckover tells me, gives them up a clear thousand a-year of her own jointure for their establishment."

"Well," said Jack; "that's a floorer, and no mistake—what's to be done?"

"Go!" said Peckover, "that's the scheme; as the woman in Shakespeare, that Mrs. P. reads to me sometimes, says,

"Stand not upon the order of going, but go."

"Go!" said Jack; "but it's no go."

"You lose nothing by the yacht," said Peckover, "and that's something,—for Mrs. Peckover has heard that she isn't worth half the money you gave for her. I never trouble my head with those things, ha, ha, ha! However, I can't stay, because I promised Mrs. P. to be back to luncheon; so here, take your bill, and all will be right."

"Yes," said Jack, twiddling the invaluable document in his hands; "but I can't go, and no mistake, this time."

"Well," said Peckover, "I bear no malice; you have jumped high, and must put up with a tumble. I'll shake hands with you for old sporting's sake, only don't let Mrs. P. know it. I'll settle all the rest with Wagley, and you'll hear no more about "Psyche." Every man has his rubs in this world,—not that I trouble my head with such matters, ha, ha, ha!"

And so the friends parted. Jack proceeded to his lodgings, enquired for Hickman,—a separation from whom he somehow dreaded; the sneering impertinence of Lady Lavinia's livery-servant had prepared him for a most tremendous display of insolence from his own man. But here his apprehensions were groundless; for Lord Wagley himself, having taken the yacht over to fetch Lord Tom, had, without thinking of announcing any change in the state of Brag's affairs, taken Hickman and the luncheon as he found them on board, all ready prepared,—a circumstance of which Jack most cunningly availed himself: and having paid the amount of his lodging-rent, and told the landlady that he was going over to Ryde, in order personally to circulate his invitations to the ball he was about to give, he sent for a chaise from "The Fountain," and proceeded *vid* Newport to that place; having the satisfaction during his *trajet* to perceive his late "tall bark" gracefully cutting through the bright waters, seemingly eager to be freighted with his bitterest enemies.

When he reached the cockney watering place, conscious of the presence of people there whom he much dreaded to see, he was driven to "The Pier Hotel," where he remained during the evening closely ensconced; and at nine o'clock on the following morning crossed to the "Quebec Tavern." at Portsmouth, where he embarked in "The Rocket" coach for London, having, after all his precautions, encountered on the Pier at Ryde, as he was following the wheelbarrow which contained his trunk and bag, the Lydiards and Rushtons taking their morning walk. He did not *see* them; but, although he averted his head, he could not shut his ears to the undisguised titterings in which they indulged as he passed them.

Upon Jack's arrival in London, he felt that the game was so completely up, and he himself so completely down, that any attempt to rally, or restore himself to the place which he had struggled so long to maintain, would be wholly unavailing; and therefore betaking himself in a hack-cab, in company with his one trunk and carpet-bag, to his lodging at Kennington, he set himself down to consider what course it was best to pursue.

His first impulse was to go off and visit his mother, but in what character, puzzled him most. Was she more likely to contribute to assist him if he still appeared the prosperous gentleman on the eve of marrying a Lady Lavinia?—or would her maternal heart more affectionately melt if he told her the truth, and confessed the ruin of his fortunes?

In either case Jack felt something like a security that she would not be unassailable by his persuasion, or deaf to his claims; it was as to the game to be played with Mr. Salmon that our hero was chiefly solicitous. His acceptance for five hundred pounds had that day, of course, been dishonoured; because, although he had still three hundred in his banker's hands, he knew that the firm knew enough of *him* not to maintain his credit at the expense of even so small a sum as the other two, which were essential to the payment of his bill. If he were to see Salmon so immediately after this event, in his fallen state, Salmon's indignation would no doubt outweigh his compassion: if he flourished off for a day or two longer, upon the higher scale, he might contrive to induce him into some arrangement for the renewal of the bill, or even into some fresh advance upon the faith of his proposed union with the jointured widow: therefore, in the end, Jack determined to let matters rest till the morning, and then, having called on his banker, and drawn a cheque for present use in the gay line, out-manceuvre Salmon, win his mother's support, and start in some new sphere, in which his sharpness might be available.

These matters settled in his mind, Jack proceeded to eat, with no great appetite, a portion of a cold shoulder of roasted mutton which his landlady had two days before dressed for her husband's

dinner, and which, seeing Jack out of spirits, she had brought him up for supper, with a few pickled onions of her own contrivance. This banquet, served by the light of two candles, of which Jack felt scientifically the meanest possible opinion, certainly did afford a very striking contrast to the gaiety and comfort of his late yacht and her laughing passengers. As he drank from a battered pewter-pot the "heavy wet" of Whitbread and Co. he could not banish from his memory, or even from his sight, the odious Dr. Munx swallowing glass after glass of his champagne; nor, while munching part of a loaf of three days' standing, reflect without horror upon the consumption of pine-apples on board "The Psyche."

It is quite true that Jack was not absolutely reduced as yet to the necessity of partaking of such poor food, or imbibing such coarse beverage; but he felt a necessity for rest, and even concealment, until his line was taken; and "dead beat," as he himself would have said, crawled to his kennel, and felt neither courage nor inclination to leave it. To his landlady this change was not so perceptible as it would have been to those who had been accustomed to see him in "the world." While at his "little place in Surrey," he had always kept himself within bounds; and the carpenter and his wife were both perfectly satisfied with their lodger, and never even guessed at the extent of his vagaries at what he elegantly called "The West-end."

The morning came, and with it the necessity for action. He had determined to continue his bright career far a day or two at least, as far as his mother and father-in-law were concerned: after that period, the numerous interesting enquiries which would undoubtedly be made about him by the Cowes' tradesmen, Hickman, and all the rest of the Vectans, would render a retreat necessary; not but that, upon the whole, he thought the arrangement about the yacht was a good one,—as it *was* to go, it was best as it was; and then for the smaller bills, if his mother was good-natured, why, he would pay them,—for in money matters there really was no bad principle about Jack; and in the affair of the five-hundred pound bill, which he had not paid, it was given more because he felt he had actually a claim to what he required, out of the business, and that Salmon was assuming rather too much in the direction of the financial department of the establishment.

At about twelve o'clock, then, Jack issued forth from his "little place," and calling a hackney-coach from the stand at Kennington-Cross, stepped into it, and directed the man to drive him to his bankers'. The man, of course, obeyed, and Jack entered the shop;—was received, as usual, by one of the partners, with great civility,—talked of the weather, of Cowes, of the Yacht-Club, of Wagley, and everybody else as usual,—till, by way of varying the conversation, he asked for a cheque, and drew thereupon for one

hundred pounds: this he tossed down on the counter with one of his most graceful movements, saying loud enough to astonish a butcher's-boy and a maid-servant who were respectively getting three pound ten, and two pound five, from the cashier, "I'll take one fifty, four tens, and ten sovereigns."

The cashier looked at the cheque,—then fumbled in a drawer,—then carried it to a gentleman with a pen behind his ear, who was standing at a desk in a corner; he took it from him, and walked off with it and a parchment-covered book into the parlour, and the cashier began to read another cheque and prepare to pay it.

"Well," said Jack, "where's the money?"

"Would you just step into the parlour, sir?" said the cashier.

"Parlour!" said Jack; "eh?—I—I don't know."

"Mr. Brag!" said the partner, coming forward and indicating a desire for a parley. Jack obeyed the call, and left the counter,—a movement followed by a strange look interchanged between the cashier and the clerk next him, which being truly interpreted by the butcher's boy, and the maid-servant, caused the former to put his finger to his nose, and the latter to burst out laughing; the one having been most unceremoniously shoved out of his turn, and the other most engagingly looked at by Jack, when he was presenting his draft in all the ecstasy of swagger.

"We have no money of yours in our hands," said the partner to Brag; "and you know our rule upon that point."

"No money of mine!" said Brag; "why you have three hundred pounds of mine paid in to my account by Mr. Salmon, and you acknowledged the receipt—sent me word to say so, all straight up, right down, and no mistake!"

"So we had," said the partner, "till yesterday; but we yesterday paid your acceptance for five hundred, in favour of Mr. Salmon himself."

"Paid it!" said Brag, "the deuce you did! What! advanced two hundred on my account?"

"No;" said the partner, "you had five hundred pounds here to your credit, and of course the bill was paid."

"I, five hundred!" said Jack; "why, when was the other two paid in?"

"Yesterday morning, I think," said the partner, "Mr. Jiggins, just turn to Mr. Brag's account."

Jiggins did turn to the account, and yesterday morning it was.

The reader, perhaps, is at this moment as little aware of the real nature of this proceeding as Jack himself was; but when he comes to be enlightened, he will have, perhaps, a higher opinion of Mr. Salmon's intellectuality than he previously had. The truth is, that Salmon had not paid away Jack's bill; but on the morning it became due,—the morning preceding the day of which we now treat,

—Mr. Salmon, having duly endorsed the said bill, sent a friend to the bankers' to present it; it was dishonoured, as he anticipated, they not having assets to pay it.

The moment Salmon gets this intelligence, he proceeds to the banking-house, in great agitation, and states his surprise at such a "return," as he himself had paid in three hundred very recently to Mr. Brag's account.

"Very true," said the partner to Salmon, "and *that* he has not drawn upon; but, Mr. Salmon, you know our rule."

Salmon *did* know their rule, and that knowledge had induced him, as we know, to have another banker. However, Jem had done all he wanted, he had ascertained that his worthy son-in-law and senior had left the three hundred untouched; whereupon, somewhere about one o'clock, he sends a friend,—not the man who had presented the bill, but another,—and through *him* pays in two hundred pounds to Jack's account; having done this, his former friend "calls again" before five at the banking-house with the five-hundred pound acceptance, to hear if there is any better news for him, and, Jack's account now being adequate to the demand, the bill is paid. Salmon, by this manœuvre gets back the three hundred pounds he had advanced to Jack, and the additional two, which he had so recently paid in, leaving to the honour, if not profit, of poor Brag, the five hundred-pound bill, duly paid and "released."

This was a *coup* for which Jack certainly was not prepared—it destroyed his last hope: fifteen shillings and ninepence halfpenny was now the amount of his ready money. Could he continue, under such circumstances, even for a day, to ride the high horse with Salmon; it *was* a question; and the more he thought over the matter, the more he considered the fact that Salmon had not only saved *his* credit at the banker's, but got back his own money, the more he encouraged the hope that he might be inclined to put faith in the representations which he proposed to make with regard to his affairs; all depending upon their being made off hand, straight up, right down, and no mistake.

Jack, mystified as he was at the time, proceeded to his door-plate in Grosvenor-street, where the master of the house, whose "lady" occupied the lower part of it as a milliner, was greatly pleased to see him once again, and in the plenitude of his happiness informed him that several persons from the Isle of Wight had called to enquire for him that morning, and that two of them said they would call again in the evening. This intelligence, if not altogether pleasant, was at all events seasonable; since, as the next day was Sunday, if Jack could contrive to avoid these "obliging enquirers" till after midnight, he might have a day to himself in which to make some sort of arrangement.

Jack prudently resolved to house himself until the shades of

evening might render his wanderings secure, and then to betake himself to the shop, find Salmon, and manage him as he best could, according to circumstances. Where he concealed himself is no matter of importance to us ; but about nine o'clock, when the natural darkness of the evening, greatly improved by the tinting of a metropolitan atmosphere, seemed apt and fitting for his purpose, he bent his steps towards the well-known home of his fathers ; having arrived at which, he found, contrary to the custom of other times, that, although it was Saturday night, the shop closed, the shutters hermetically sealed, and the whole lower part of the house enveloped in Cimmerian darkness ; not so, however, the drawing-room floor ; there, although the blinds were down, blazed a brilliant light ; and as he paused under the windows, Jack thought he heard singing, and was sure he heard laughter loud and long. He knocked at the door ; it was opened by an old servant who as yet had not received her discharge.

"Ah, Margery !" said Jack, "how are you ? alive and merry still ? —Salmon at home ?—how's mother ?"

"Mr. Salmon is at home, Master John," said the old woman, "as you may hear ; missus it out at the lodgings."

"Is there any company here ?" said Jack.

"I believe there is, too," said Margery.

"Well," said Jack, "take up my name—eh ?—I'll go and have a look at 'em ; straight up, right down, and no mistake !"

"Take up your name in your own house !" said Margery ; "if your name goes up, you'll see none o' the fun, depend upon it ; go yourself into the drawing-room—who has so good a reason ?—and then you'll see what's what, and then I hope my poor missus will know of the goings on."

"Gad, I believe you are right," said Jack ; "so I will : " to which resolution Jack instantly screwed himself, because he thought that by catching Salmon out, as he called it, in his dissipation, he might threaten him into compliance with his demands, and accordingly up he went ; the old woman standing in the passage rubbing her hands for joy, and chuckling aloud as she mumbled the words, "That's just what I wanted."

Jack went through the masonic ceremony of knocking at the door ; but the joyous "Come in !" of the master of the house so speedily followed the "tap," that in another second Jack stood in the midst of the astonished assembly. Banquo's arrival at Lady Macbeth's party, could not have been more unexpected or unwelcome ; a dead silence followed his appearance ; and Salmon, involuntarily getting up from his seat, muttered a word or two.

"I hope," said Jack, "I don't intrude, as the man says in the play."

"Not in the least," said Salmon. "Glad to see you. Won't

you take a chair?—Thought you were at Cowes,—twig?"

"Where's mother?" said Jack.

"At the willa," said Salmon. "She can't stand London air, so——"

Here some of the party coughed, and some tittered; and Miss Hogg, who was seated on Salmon's left hand, leaned across him to her ma', who was placed on his right, to announce her recognition of "the fool of a son of the Widow Waddle," whom she had denounced to his face at Lewes. Two slang-looking men graced the board, between whom was placed Mrs. Cropper,—Mrs. Dalington's housekeeper,—of whom the reader has heard before; and, to crown all, acting as croupier to Jim Salmon, was installed, with a group of jugs and bottles before him, the confidential minister of Colonel Stiffkey, who had taken so active a part in the manufacture of Sir Stumpy Dubbs's particular punch on the evening, at Eastbourne, when Jack had lost the money at *Ecarté* which he had not paid.

The moment Jack glanced his eye round the room, saw the profusion of fruits, and wines, and everything else of the best sort, with which the table was covered, and beheld the guests considerably elevated by their libations, of whom the faces of two or three were fatally familiar to his eye, he stammered something, retreated towards the door, and, making one of his "slap-up" bows, told Salmon he would call on him in the morning; and quitted the room without making any further observation, or taking the least notice of anybody who was in it.

As he skipped down the stairs, a shout of laughter from the assembled guests rang in his ears; and without stopping to see old Margery, or to have the door opened for him, he quitted the house, called a hackney-coach, and with a stock of ready money reduced to less than thirteen shillings and four-pence,—a sum never to be forgotten by *him* after reading Leveret's bill,—he told the coachman to drive him to No. 72, Elysium Row, Pentonville.

Jack, as we have seen, was a foolish, vain, conceited fellow; and, in supporting his system of absurd pretensions, was betrayed, not only into equivocations and evasions, but even into falsehood: yet, mean and contemptible as he might have been, he was not quite insensible to the feelings of humanity. The flushed countenances of the maudlin revellers in the room which he had been accustomed only on Sundays to see occupied by his parents and his lost sister, at a time when the proceedings of the family were regulated by religion and honesty,—the fumes of the wine,—the gaudy display of luxuries hitherto strangers to that board,—the sounds of mirth and gaiety ringing in his ears,—and *she*, who had for years been mistress of the house, from whose property the means to furnish out the feast were derived,—absent—exiled—neglected!—the voice of

about it, and how I have fallen into this scrape. Nay, I would come to-you to-morrow, if I thought you would be alone."

"I'm sure to be alone," said the old lady; "for James told me, if he did not come home this evening he shouldn't be back till Monday."

"Then, mother, expect me here to-morrow," said Jack. "I'll settle my plans to-night; and the last hours I spend in London shall be with you."

"Bless you, John! bless you, my poor child!" said his fond parent; and again giving him a cordial embrace, they parted.

And what did this meeting and this parting show? In the days of his assumption she admonished him,—in the time of his pride she rebuked him,—in the career of his folly she laughed at him; but, neglected and despised as she had been by him, when he comes to her in the day of defeat and in the hour of distress, she clasps him to the bosom which first nurtured him; sacrifices her own comforts to his necessities; and, with all her little imperfections on her head, proves herself the sweetest and tenderest of All God's noble works,—a MOTHER.

Jack was however unable to fulfil his promise of visiting, or even writing to her. He returned late to his lodgings; and in the morning, having told his landlord that he was obliged to give up the rooms, the man saw so great a change in his manner, that he became apprehensive that something was preying upon his mind, which might induce serious consequences; and having received the amount of his bill, and consulted with his wife, with whom Jack considered himself an uncommon favourite, and no mistake, he plainly told him what he thought. Jack, who saw that the very last feather of the peacock had now dropped from the daw's tail, and that a sincere friend, however humble his station, was what was most essential to him at the moment, admitted the fact of his involvement, and with equal sincerity avowed his inability to discover at the moment any means of extrication.

"Have you a mind," said the carpenter, "to go to Spain?"

"Spain!" said Jack; "what! to fight?"

"No," said the carpenter, "not exactly. Do you know what a Commissary is?"

"Can't say I do," said Jack.

"Why," said the carpenter, "he has to get bread and meat, and other things of that sort for the army; I have a cousin going off to-morrow in the steamer, who is one; and my wife and I are going down to Poplar to dine with him. I know they have room for three or four more,—good pay,—not ready money down, to be sure, but in uncommon good bills on an old established firm in Aldgate,—a very smart uniform and a very snug berth. I'm sure I could get you *that*."

"But," said Jack, "I don't know how to get bread and bullocks."

"Oh," said the carpenter, "they tell *me* that the office will be quite a sinecure; I think it's a fair prospect; we all three can go down in my chay-cart and settle the thing at once, for my cousin Bill is high up in the service."

Jack paused a little,—the struggle was a severe, but a short one:—at all events, the acceptance of the offer would get him free of expense out of the way of his creditors; and if they would allow him to change his name,—which the carpenter said he knew they would, inasmuch as his cousin Bill Nibbs, had done the same thing,—he would go: and accordingly, the next day, Sunday, the 23rd of August, redoubtable Jack, with the carpenter and the carpenter's wife, drove in the chay-cart to Poplar, where they met their relation; and, before ten o'clock the next morning Jack was steaming down the river on his way to Falmouth, under the name, style, and title of acting-assistant-deputy-deputy-assistant commissary-general Templegrove, in the service of Her Catholic Majesty.

Nothing has been heard publicly of the acting-assistant-deputy-deputy-assistant-commissary-general since his departure. His mother has received a letter or two from him, the contents of which have not transpired.

Mr. James Salmon early in the month of November, was run away with, by his spirited horse, thrown out of his gig, coming down the hill from Hampstead, where he had been taking a *tête-à-tête* mutton chop with Miss Roseville, at Jack Straw's Castle; and falling with his head upon a flint stone, was unfortunately killed upon the spot. His fair companion escaped with only a slight bruise or two, and having been put into an omnibus, arrived in time at the theatre, where she acted with unqualified applause the Widow Cheerly, in which character she introduced her popular ballad—

"I'm a poor country maid that's for sartain;"

and concluded the evening's entertainments with "The Actress of all Work."

The widow Salmon, in consequence of her young husband's death, is comfortably re-established in her shop, and has written to her son to come and take the command of his own forces in London: so that those who have laughed at his follies and vanities, and who have felt for the misfortunes of his kind-hearted parent, during his feverish and ill-judged career, may yet hope to see him respectably settled in trade, the sterling characteristic of our blessed country, in the pursuit and prosperity of which, every true-born Englishman must glory.

THE END.







